

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING – July 14, 2021, Called to order at 6:07pm

Attendees: Mike Champoux
Valerie Gingrich

Nancy Vallee
Carol Boisvert

Miriam Nelson

Greg Maynard

Suzanne Sullivan

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Roll Call** – All present except Lilia Maselli, Pat Giroux. Rob Oliveri joined at 6:14pm. Town Manager Jeff Hull was also in attendance.
3. **Approval of minutes** from 6/15/21 – approved.
4. **Report from Planning Office: New business / commercial activity**

Valerie: two new tenants signed for Wilmington Nutrition and 355 Main Street, which hasn't been filled for a long time which is exciting. Some other industrial/commercial filing at 100 Research Drive. Still reviewing the Textron site development. 225 Andover Street self storage project being reviewed. Suzanne: What's happening with The Art of the Event? Nancy has the same question. Suzanne: Is there any future for that area—general industrial zoning. Valerie: The complication is that behind that is tracks so more likely to stay as industrial use. Nancy: So we don't know who bought that building? Nancy will find out. Suzanne: Maybe there's potential here. Could be an overlay. Mike: We should find out who the owner is and find them fast. Nancy will contact Gill from the Art of the Event, too. Valerie: Oliver Street Capital looks to be the owners. Purchased January. Location is 353 Middlesex. Mike: What's the action plan? Suzanne: We could write a letter like we did for Textron. Suzanne will send Nancy a copy of the Textron letter. Nancy will reach out personally and use the letter as a follow up, maybe invite them to a meeting. Pat Giroux might be able to find a contact. Carol: could we make it a general practice of the committee to have a template letter to send to potential developers? Mike: no aversion to that. Suzanne: likes the idea. We can use the letter to Textron as a starting point. Nancy: between that and the flier we're good.

5. Local Rapid Recovery Response – Project Update (Nancy, Valerie, Mike)

Mike: summarizes LRRP grant. Summary: we applied for the grant and were accepted. The grant comes in the form of consulting. Our consultants are BerryDunn. They walked the area and generated data from the survey. Update: we will have recommendations and then a project plan which will become a formal proposal at some point. Valerie: Phase 1 was data gathering. Now we've moved into Phase 2 which is developing projects, which is on the RRP Project Data sheet. Created 5 different projects, set up data on those and a website where we can get more info on it.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
2021 AUG 19 AM 11:05
TOWN OF WILMINGTON, MA

Link to website: <https://berrydunn.mysocialpinpoint.com/wilmington-ma> Valerie did an overview of the website. There's a place on the website to share your thoughts, and the goal is to get input from the community at large on this project. Mike: Earlier we did a survey of businesses but this now is for community members' input. Nancy: this will be shared with all our media outlets and the town. Nancy: concerned that people might be confused when looking at the website and wants to put out in our message an explanation of how to use the site. Valerie: Do we want to tie the project recommendations into the message for the website or not tie it in and then people can put comments on anything on the website? Carol: hopes it's intuitive so people are able to use it easily. Mike: understands from the demo that Social Pinpoint is the application that consultants have to use—as told to them by the state. We can ask BerryDunn to put some language in there to encourage people to not be afraid of interacting with the website. Valerie: they even suggested that group members can start to put stuff in so people aren't nervous. Rob: What if people don't have access to the internet? How will this information about community feedback be distributed to ensure that people who don't have internet access will still be informed? Nancy: We can do something like when we sent the surveys out—boots on the ground—to make sure. Mike: We can put it in the Town Crier in print and digitally in media outlets and on Facebook. Hopefully if people don't have internet, they will be interested enough to have the Town Crier or to reach out to someone. Suzanne: people can also use the Senior Center's computer if seniors need access. Perhaps we can reach out to Terry. Valerie: We have reached out to the community in the past, which may give us a good idea of what we might see already. Jeff Hull: could suggest that people go to the library and use the library computers. Nancy: We can put it on WCTV and the Wilmington Apple. Mike: ways we can send out information: WEDC page on town website, WCTV, library computers. We also need to clean up some of the language that describes what we're asking people to respond to. It says in the first paragraph on the website. Nancy: We should make the language short and simple so it's easy to understand. Carol: We should put examples explaining what the realms are on the website. We can ask the consultants to add that. Mike: The phrase "share with us about" could be changed to "share your thoughts about." Mike: We should give them feedback asking them to define what the comment label options are.

Valerie goes through the 5 projects that the consultants came up with on the RRP Project Sheet (see sheet). Projects are not in a specific order. Consultants are requesting a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for projects 1 & 2. Carol: we could take initiative on these projects on our own even if we don't end up doing them with the grant. We need to prioritize when making our decision. Mike: envisions decisions being made by a mix of different members from the WEDC, the Planning Board, etc. Consultants felt confident that they could help with project 4 more without having to get an expert—they already know a lot about the subject matter. Carol: Maybe we could get the MBTA involved and ask them to spruce up the area too (for the 5th project on the sheet). Mike: emphasized the importance of sharing the link to the website for feedback on committee members' social media pages. Carol: Will we be able to do this before August? Mike: We may have to do an interim meeting. Carol: Is there a timeline to go to the Board of Selectmen

in order to get this in in time? Mike: What would the timeline be for a request for funding? Jeff: October would be a good time to put in a request. Nancy: Consultants are hired until the end of August. Mike: two week window for community feedback. Suzanne: Can people see the comments that other people put up? General opinion is that people can see others' comments. Suzanne will put up comments on the website. Miriam will do a screen recorded video tutorial of how the website works.

6. Status update Town Video Project - Nancy

Nancy: video is still in the works. The logo is being worked on by the designer. Hoping for the end of the week for it to be done. Need people—such as Jeff Hull—to look at the video and approve it before it goes live.

7. Town Manager Jeff Hull – Strategy and process for determining use of State Covid Relief Funds

Jeff: having internal discussions to develop a draft of how money should be earmarked, which will be brought to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee for input, which will also have public comments, then continue from there. American Rescue Plan \$7 Million breakdown—different processes for different chunks of money. Approx. \$4.5 Million supposed to be coming from the state that needs to be spent before September 25 or 26. Possible categories for spending: lost revenue category possibility, lost expenditures from the pandemic possibility. We were able to get grants from the state which we could use if there was a Covid flare up. Another category for businesses that have been impacted from the pandemic. Need to determine the classes of businesses that have been affected and how that aid would be administered. Another category: providing a premium pay for certain essential workers who were impacted by Covid. Mostly looking at water infrastructure and grant funding categories for spending state relief funds.

Mike: hoping that some possible uses would be to fund economic recovery, such as the projects from the earlier discussion. Seems to be a natural dovetail into Covid recovery funds. Nancy: echos, Covid recovery certainly has an emphasis on the business community. Carol: could the consultants know how these funds are allowed to be used? Mike: would like to be able to bring a final project before the Board of Selectmen so there's an opportunity to access some of these funds for the projects.

8. Next targeted zoning by-law update for next Town Meeting Warrant

Mike: Are there simple housekeeping zoning by-law updates we may be able to improve to propose at the next town meeting? Now that we're allowing breweries, can we make the zoning change to allow these breweries to have taprooms? Jeff: need to pay attention to the Licencing Beverages Control Commission. Valerie: need to find out what the requirements would be

(would there have to be tasting, food, etc). Greg: What is the importance of the tasting room? Examples? Mike: The Oaken Iron in Andover doesn't have the Restaurant component. Greg: We're trying to draw economic activity to the town. Is having a tasting room attached to a brewery really going to be a better draw? If it's an act of congress to approve it, and it's going to be a small draw regardless, isn't what we have already with the previous article sufficient? Carol recalls that taprooms came up on the survey. Wants to have businesses that draw people in so that they stay in town and don't go out of town for their business when they get out of work. Suzanne: many breweries don't want to have to sell food too, just want to be able to sell their beer. Would have a bigger draw. There are some impediments to having multiple beers without ordering food. Mike: can do basic food items without being a restaurant. This may draw in more micro breweries. To answer Greg's question, allowing taprooms would create a diverse experience available in town. The industry has exploded and is in demand. There's tax revenues and more, too, but the biggest thing is that it would add interesting experiences to town. Valerie: We should try to find something that is pinpointed and not a total overhaul if we would like to do this. Valerie will talk to Shelly and Al to get information about licensing to bring back. Carol: Is there a way to get the Hop Town story out to brew pub people? Mike: sent a story to the Brewers Association—who was enthusiastic and sent it out to members.

9. New Business: Member statements & discussion agenda items for next / future meeting(s)

a. Rob: Brew-Pubs discussion carry-over from previous meeting (if applicable)

Rob: Tom Oliveri owns a handful of businesses already and has consolidated Wormtown and is ready to start something new. Is ready to help us out and open to committee members taking a trip to Worcester to see what he has set up. Would like to get him out to Wilmington. Could do a tele-conference also. Carol: Is there a site that someone could get situated in? Would be nice to be aware of that so we can give potential interested parties recommendations. Rob will invite Tom to the next meeting. If coming out here isn't convenient for him, we could Zoom.

Mike: Makes sense to get someone on staff at town hall who has the responsibility of Economic Development. Mike would like to establish a subcommittee to review how to get this position created, which involves creating a proposal to the Board of Selectmen as soon as possible. Pat Giroux is interested. Suzanne thinks it's a great idea. Jeff: reviewed possibilities for positions. If this is going to be considered, the position needs to be under the direction of the planning director. Concerned about it creating a disconnect between the planning process and the economic development process, wants it to be a coordinated effort. Certainly is willing to listen to a proposal but needs to be sold on it. Rob: Is it common to have this position? Suzanne: Most communities have some kind of person, but every community is different because it is unique to each community's situation. Mike: cites an example of the city of Lowell's economic development position, which is under the planning department. The position could theoretically pay for itself because well-done economic development brings in revenue. Suzanne: the person

should definitely have good grant-writing skills. Jeff: The Finance committee is really pushing for a grant-writer position right now. If we were doing just an economic development person, we need to also be mindful that the staff only has certain bandwidth—pursuing grants is only the start, need to also maintain records, etc. Suzanne: right now there are a lot of federal funds for street changes, climate change, etc. Would be ideal for us to get ahead of that now.

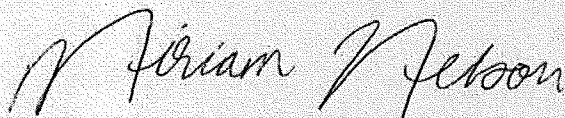
Creating a subcommittee. Members: Suzanne, Carol, Greg, Pat

10. Public Comments - None

11. Next Meeting Date: August 18. Possible meeting again sooner for LLRP meeting

Meeting motioned to be adjourned at 8:03pm

Respectfully submitted by Miriam Nelson, Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Miriam Nelson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the date.

8/19/21