



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development
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MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
TUESDAY, June 17, 2014 7:30 AM
Charles River Room PSAB

Present: Matt Talcoff, Chair; Glen Cammarano; Marty Jacobs; Moe Handel; Tom Jacob;
Michael Wilcox; Rick Putprush; Brian Nadler; Bob Hentschel; Peter Atallah; Bill Day; and
Devra Bailin, staff

Not Present: Elizabeth Grimes; Janet O'Connor; Bruce Herman; Matt Borrelli; and Lee Newman

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of May 7, 2014.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting and Hearing Dates

Because our next meeting was scheduled for the first Wednesday of September, which is also the first day of school, the members decided to change our next meeting to the second Wednesday of September, which is **September 10th**. All meetings will be in the Charles River Room at PSAB.

III. Update on Mixed Use-128 Residential Overlay

There was no further update. Lee had advised last month that she had spoken to Phil Herr and he was still willing to do the work but was presently busy with a Newton project. She advised that we will target November Town Meeting. Marty will talk with Lee about moving this forward.

IV. Update on Industrial District Subcommittee

The members discussed the need for the Subcommittee to meet to outline actual proposals so that Devra can bring them to the attention of Needham Heights Association, with whom she is meeting on September 8th. The members of the Subcommittee agreed to meet on July 8th at 7:30 a.m. to outline the proposals for the Industrial 1 and Reservoir Street Industrial zones. Moe said that we need to do an elevation—maybe float a balloon to show what the height will be at various locations. Rick agreed that elevation is the key issue rather than height. **The Planning Department should ask Ben Anderson to provide the elevations of the areas via GIS. Devra will then ask Mark Gluesing if he could create a few cardboard buildings which would demonstrate the elevations. The Planning Department will also try to arrange for a traffic study to be done based on the proposed zoning.** Rick and Moe noted that there should be 2-3 different elevation points. Devra noted that the Subcommittee does think

the 50' setback, which is applicable only to Industrial 1, should be repealed in favor of a 20-25' landscaping buffer.

Marty wanted to bring to the CEA's attention that Industrial 1 and Industrials Districts are zones that allow by special permit "other lawful uses", which could include a Registered Marijuana Dispensary (RMD). In other words, the Planning Board is exploring how to deal with medical mj uses under the current By-Law in the event Town Meeting doesn't act—medical clinics, use determinations, other uses requiring special permits, etc.

V. Update on Needham Crossing Work

Mike brought a prototype of the signs which will be installed. The members were appreciative of Bulfinch's efforts and thought the colors and font looked good. The signs will be installed by next week and we can move on to signage along Highland. As we only have about \$1000 left, we may not be able to do much.

VI. Update on N2 and New Companies Moving into the Corridor

Due to the need of members to leave early, we skipped this issue. Devra sent a request out to members about joining the Newton Economic Development Commission at its meeting on September 9th in the evening at Newton City Hall. All members are encouraged to attend but Devra hopes to have at least half our members in attendance. The topic will be joint efforts to promote the corridor.

VII. Update on Downtown Subcommittee (Streamlining Suggestions)

Two streamlining amendments we approved by Town Meeting last month—turning over review and approval authority to the Design Review Board for façade modifications in the downtown and creating a threshold under which changes in use which don't increase the cumulative parking demand to 10 or more in the Center Business, Avery Square and Chestnut Street Business Districts or 4 or more in other districts will not require waivers. Going forward both Liz and Marty will meet with the Subcommittee to discuss moving forward on other items.

Marty brought us up to date on the status of the discussions regarding insignificant modifications post construction and boiler plate provisions in decisions. He explained that some members of the Planning Board feel there is no real enforcement of decisions and that it is only when someone is seeking something that the Board has the ability to enforce the conditions of the permit. So it isn't really the streamlining that is opposed. He noted that others, including Devra, Moe and Liz, want to separate enforcement from permitting and that it isn't up to the PB to enforce decisions; that that is up to the Building Commissioner. Marty believes that if one can ensure enforcement, the PB might be willing to let more matters be resolved administratively. Moe that that was a good idea but he believes that enforcement is not the PB's responsibility. He suggested that the BOS is establishing its goals and, if one of them is enforcement of special permits and site plans, that might prove helpful in persuading the PB. Tom noted that he's in favor of separating enforcement from permitting; if there's nothing significantly wrong with a site by way of compliance, the process shouldn't be onerous. Bob noted that if there are egregious violations, then the PB and Planning Department should already be aware of them. Marty noted this is a practical problem; if neighbors and others don't call in, awareness of issues might

not come to light. Devra noted that, as a PB member, she reviewed sites herself and if there were problems, asked the responsible party to come before the PB unless they expressed a willingness to correct them without coming in. Marty reiterated that the PB just wants to make sure enforcement is taken care of; if they can be satisfied, then it will be possible to simplify the process by making it more administrative.

VIII. Update on Babson Application for Detailed Marketing Plan

This was not discussed.

IX. Update on Town Meeting

See above. **It was also discussed that the outdoor seating provisions should be expanded to apply to all restaurants at Town Meeting in the fall.**

X. Update on the Medical Marijuana Overlay District

See above.

XI. Update from Downtown Streetscape Working Group

Tom explained that the Board of Selectmen held a meeting on the Group's recommendations on June 4th. Approximately 10-15 people were in attendance from the public (leaving aside the Girl Scouts, who made a presentation about the need for bike racks). The Group will stay in place to advise the Town during the design phase. That is expected to take about a year. Construction is expected to begin in 2016. Phase 1 will be the traffic signals and major intersections. Phase 2 will be the west side of Great Plain; Phase 3 east side of Great Plain; Phase 4 north side of Great Plain; and Phase 5 Chestnut Street and undergrounding of utilities on Highland Avenue and Chapel Street (and lot). The Town has \$2-3 million in Chapter 90 funds and anticipates approximately \$900,000 per year from that source going forward.

Bill asked about the walkway between the Church and Farmhouse restaurant. Tom said that they are making headway with the Church—the trustees/directors are ok with it but the membership will need to approve.

XII. Other Business

There was a brief discussion of the General Dynamics project. Mike noted that he was told it was dead. Devra said that she was told that the decision regarding the purchaser of the property will be made shortly—within the next week or so.

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 a.m.