

Economic Development Committee

Minutes: February 14, 2017

Meeting called to order at 8:05 am.

Members present: Jack MacKeen, Jerry Culbert, Dick Downey, Chris Worthy, Ron Calabria, Lynda Thayer, Andrew Scribner-MacLean, Bill Nemser, and Karen Freker. Members absent: Paul Nickelsberg, Sarah Cressy.

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes (01.24.17)** - Approved with amendments.
2. **BOS public arts update/discussion** - Bill discussed recent efforts between his office and the Cultural Council to move forward with several public arts initiatives. He noted the Board of Selectmen had voiced general support for public arts and had also viewed a presentation by Artspace member Erik Hansen. Bill believes the EDC and Cultural Council could work together on several efforts - both to cultivate the cultural aspect of Maynard and to improve aesthetics.
3. **Dynamic Marketing Shift Conference** - Bill reported on this conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, reporting that several key takeaways involving current marketing trends were germane to the EDCs current efforts:
 - Significant growth in the restaurant industry.
 - The Internet now accounts for 8% of retail sales.
 - Millennials are the first segment of the population generations to spend more on restaurants than on groceries.
 - Groceries are purchased at an average of five locations.
 - Consignment stores have increased in popularity because of the "designer" aspect of this market.
 - Current demand in communities is for "lifestyle centers." Bill pointed out 129 Parker is an example of this.
 - Commercial real estate trends are showing that "right sizing" is a new retail dynamic in which traditionally large retailers move to smaller facilities.
 - Towns should stress the need for online presence for local retailers - Facebook and other social media is not enough.
 - Marketing the "experience" of downtown should be a key component of an economic strategy. Also stresses the importance of the value of "festival-i-zation" to downtowns.

4. **Current Activities/Projects**

Wayfinding/Map etc. - Linda and Dick discussed efforts on coordinating wayfinding with an update of the business list in process. Will be discussed further once a list is completed.

Traffic/Parking - Dick and Jerry discussed their recent discussions with the town including meeting with the Town's police officer dedicated to parking. The officer stated that his enforcement time is limited and that, in his opinion, the new types of parking meters with vendor stations would not be desirable. He also felt that improving access to the "River" parking lot might help people better understand

parking options downtown. Andrew pointed out that doing anything prior to the Parking Study would be premature and that the study will help the EDC arrive at some conclusions regarding a direction for parking improvements.

Marketing – Bill suggested the Town's website is not conducive to marketing the Town effectively. Dick stated he would look at it in depth and see if he could recommend any changes.

5. Meeting adjourned at 9:17AM.

DRAFT