

Minutes of 5/7/2020 Maynard Economic Development Committee, 8 am., via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 8:01 am.

Members present: Beck, Cressy, MacKeen, Downey, Greenstein, Nemser, Zammuto, and Thayer. Member absent: Freker.

Guests present: Zannah Noe (Ec. Dev. Project Coordinator) and Andy Moerlein (Cultural District).

Minutes of 4.30.2020 unanimously approved.

COVID Updates: MacKeen reminded the group that he sent a link to the form used to provide feedback to the Governor's Re-Open Advisory Committee.

Conversation with Jason Palitsch, Executive Director, 495/MetroWest Partnership

Jason began his new role with the Partnership in January 2020. The 495/MetroWest Partnership, through a unique public-private collaboration with businesses, municipalities, and other stakeholders, is the regional leader for creating an environment that prepares for and cultivates sustainable growth. We accomplish this by coordinating, educating, and advocating for solutions to regional constraints and limited natural resources. Interested parties may sign up to receive their newsletters at 495partnership.org.

The Partnership manages committees that address regional issues such as water, transportation, etc. However, like many, the organization has been focused almost exclusively on COVID-19 issues. Palitsch believes that the single biggest economic threat to the region is a re-occurrence of the virus.

Committee members asked Palitsch for input on best practices to assist businesses during this event. He advocated for business groups to create a business resource website, to promote "buy local" initiatives, and to even consider bartering opportunities like the Town of Harvard's local exchange site.

The MEDC asked for his feedback on hosting educational seminars and webinars. Jason feels that everyone's doing this, so the best use of resources might be to piggyback on programs from other entities.

Post COVID, Nemser will take Palitsch on a tour of Mill & Main.

Business Re-Opening. Proposals for BEEP Funding

Zammuto reported that we currently have \$10K to invest. Current subcommittee members are Zammuto, Nemser, Noe, and Cressy. This past week, Zammuto created a google doc to garner Committee input. Her sense is that they are leaning towards funding marketing efforts, but more direction is needed. MacKeen asked whether these funds should be used toward a "re-opening event?" Megan responded that from a public health perspective we're not ready for this. Beck offered to use the artmobile to continue to market Maynard.

Economic Development Plan. Greenstein asked members to review the "branding" proposal and get back to her NLT Sunday. She will then revise to incorporate feedback and work with the subcommittee to recommend next steps.

Nonprofit Signs on Public Property. For their virtual 5K Run-Walk for Cancer, Emerson Hospital asked if they could place signage on public property. Nemser found policy from 2012 that addresses this request. He will distribute to the Committee.

Cultural District Update: Moerlein reported that while the Chalk Contest drew a ton of buzz at its inception, it "puttered out." The MCC is currently working on a YouTube "Short Film" Festival.

Planning Dept. Update. Nemser is still working with Acton on the Powdermill Corridor Policy, and the Planning Board is still wrestling with some decisions regarding the 115 Main St. building (formerly Grubers). The Planning Board's next meeting is scheduled for May 19th.

Other:

-MacKeen was pleased that the BOS unanimously approved the MEDC's proposal to extend the due date and waive penalties on PP Tax.

-Both Middlesex Savings Bank and The Paper Store are relocating from the CBD to 129 Parker St.

-The former Bank of America Building on Nason Street is on the market again.

-Thayer asked if we could get an update on the status of the marijuana dispensaries? Greenstein commented that "recreational" dispensaries are currently deemed non-essential. Cressy reported that she met with the President (Julia Germaine) of Temescal Wellness a couple of months ago and asked whether or they might be interested in having a site in Maynard. Because Maynard decided not to limit marijuana dispensaries, she felt that she could not be profitable. Currently, Temescal has dispensaries in Worcester, Hudson, and Framingham.

-Thayer brought up the issue of lawn signs, and asked whether it presented a positive image?

-MacKeen reminded the group that the MEDC still has two openings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Proposed Minutes Submitted by Sarah Cressy on 5.7.2020.