

Minutes of 4/30/2020 Maynard Economic Development Committee, via Zoom, 8 am.

Meeting called to order at 8:05 am.

Members present: Megan Zammuto, Sarah Cressy, Jack MacKeen, Rosalind Greenstein, Dick Downey, Lynda Thayer, and Bill Nemser. **Members absent:** Jerry Beck and Karen Freker.

Others present: Zannah Noe (ED Project Coordinator/Town of Maynard)

Minutes of 3.12.20 and 4.23.20 unanimously approved.

COVID Updates

- Planning Board has suspended all meetings but will begin public hearing on 5.19.20. Nemser is not sure what meeting format will be used.
- Given the volume of messages, brief discussion on whether to filter information that's being forwarded. Zammuto doesn't want anything pre-filtered.

Personal Property Tax (PPT). Do we still want to recommend, at the BOS's May 5th meeting, that the Town of Maynard defer the payment of PPT until June 1st and include waiver of interest and penalties until June 30th?

- Downey says yes, ask the Town to defer until June 1st and waive applicable fees.
- Previously, Cressy supported this exploration, but after getting figures that indicate that the average downtown business pays \$89 a quarter in PPT wonders if this "ask" is meaningful, or is it all about optics? If it's not meaningful, should such a precedent be set?
- Greenstein says yes. It's about optics, but it's also important to start the conversation. Small business should not be treated as a "special interest group," because small business is what makes our downtown so special.
- Zammuto can see both sides. Her question is whether the BOS will support it? However, she does see value in bringing it forward for discussion.
- Thayer reminded Cressy that \$89 is the average, and that some bills are as large as \$500, and this is meaningful.
- Downey agreed with Thayer, and since many of the relief funds are targeted towards larger businesses, having extra time to pay PPT is helpful.

Action: MEDC voted 5-0 with 2 abstentions to recommend to the BOS that they defer PPT and waive any applicable fees to June 30, 2020. MacKeen will request BOS action through TA office.

BEEP Funds to Assist Small Businesses During this COVID-19 Event. Zammuto has asked the MBA to offer suggestions on ways we could utilize BEEP funds to assist small business but has not yet received clear guidance. Zammuto is leaning towards using funds for re-launch marketing efforts.

ReStart/ReLaunch Team. Group discussed whether this team was a MEDC or a BOS initiative? Either way, according to Greenstein, public health officials need to be included. Discussion also included whether a bigger or smaller group could be more effective.

Governor has appointed an advisory board. MacKeen is concerned that there is not any "true" small business represented, and asked Cressy how to obtain information and secure a voice at the table.

Cressy suggested that MacKeen contact Rep. Hogan. Nemser suggested that the group work through the 495 Partnership.

The following ideas were shared during a brief ReStart brainstorming session—

- Celebrate and grow creative manufacturers, i.e. Maker Spaces that can churn out PPE
- Close of the CBD on weekends to make a pedestrian mall.
- Grow outside dining experiences.

DiscoverMaynard. Event page is up and running. Restaurant page needs to be set up. Cressy, with permission, will grab some decent pictures from Maynard Restaurant FB pages and email them to Zammuto.

Economic Development Plan: Approach to Branding. Greenstein presented a draft of Maynard, MA: Home to Entrepreneurs, Makers, and Creatives. This draft explores branding Maynard's economic development potential.

Draft explored competitive advantages for Maynard which includes—

-Location. Conveniently located between 128 and 495, within an hour of RI and NH, and located in Eastern MA, near Boston, MA, and technology and innovation hub of the NE.

-Other competitive advantage is its people, especially the innovators, entrepreneurs, and creatives.

-Group discussed linking business centers together—downtown, Mill & Main, 129 Parker, and Powdermill Corridor.

-However, not included in the “brochure” but discussed was weaknesses--Maynard is not a top tier community choice due to MCAS scores and location. While location is an asset, in comparison to other communities, Maynard's not conveniently located off a major transportation portal such as 290, 495, etc.

Greenstein asked for feedback. Once completed, the copy will evolve into a marketing brochure. At some point, the group will review whether design will be done in-house or hired out.

PMR Corridor Plan. Nemser sent out information, and seeks feedback, ASAP.

Other. Nemser is writing a small grant for Memorial Park and Zammuto will update the group on the status of Wayfinding Signs at a future meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 am.

Draft Minutes Submitted by Sarah Cressy on 4.30.2020