

To: **Groton Board of Selectmen (BOS)**

From: Town of Groton – Economic Development Committee (EDC)
Russ Burke
Gina Cronin
Josh Degen
John Konetzny
Art Prest
Michael Rasmussen - C
Fay Raynor

Date: December 19, 2016

Subject: ***EDC Annual Report to BOS***

In June of 2016, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) went through a significant change in its makeup, with the addition of Gina Cronin, Josh Degen, and Fay Raynor. At the same time, Russ Burke, John Konetzny, Art Prest and Mike Rasmussen were reappointed. At the time of the new appointments/reappointments, the EDC was tasked with developing a new committee charge.

The proposed charge brought about a mission statement and vision statement, all of which are being presented to the Board of Selectmen, this evening, along with this annual report. The EDC recently approved the final draft of these documents. Along with new members, the proposed charge, and the mission and vision statements, the EDC was given a new level of importance, in light of town budget concerns and the impact on tax payers. In particular, the EDC can have a positive impact on taxes by encouraging growth that serves the economic (e.g., broadening the commercial tax base and providing jobs) and cultural (e.g., more goods and services) qualities of life in the Town of Groton.

Accomplishments over the Previous Twelve Months:

- **Town of Groton: Permitting & Approvals Guidelines** – This now-complete document provides a concise outline of the permitting process. This helps address Groton’s reputation of being difficult to navigate during the permitting process.
- **Four Corners Sewer Project** – Supported by the EDC from before it became a Town Warrant Article, this committee identified this initiative as a key to helping unlock Groton’s economy ic potential. Several EDC members attended the award ceremony.
- **Mission Statement, Vision Statement & Charge** – Presented tonight in a separate document.

Goals for the Following Twelve Months:

Growth:

- Identify key issues that need to be resolved to achieve a sustainable economic base that would provide a vibrant local economy needed to support both the growing financial needs of the municipality, and the Groton Dunstable Regional School District.

- Identify and pursue business types and locations that have the best chance of starting, growing and thriving in Groton

Education:

- Launch expanded Economic Development web presence on Town Website
- Develop content for marketing materials (online/offline) on Economic Development.
- Hold feedback focus group sessions with various constituent groups to understand current beliefs about Economic Development in Groton, as well as communicate our vision for the future to ensure community alignment
- Develop and present recommendations to various Groton Boards and Committees on the Economic Development Committee's economic five-year vision and plans

Communication:

- Develop communications plans to disseminate important information about the Economic Development Committee and current/future projects and development in Groton
- Concept Plan issues outreach for future Town Meetings in conjunction with the Planning Board

Regulation:

- Explore, recommend and implement regulatory changes as needed
- Work together with the Planning Board to support required changes in the Concept Plan
- Recommend effective incentives to encourage new business development, and retain existing businesses.
- Explore the possibility of offering early years property tax reduction and other incentives to encourage new businesses to come to, grow and thrive in Groton.

Summary:

Many communities in Massachusetts are facing economic growth and revenue generation challenges. The Town of Groton is no different.

Although there is much work to do, the EDC remains committed to tackling these fiscal challenges and developing an approach to combat these hurdles in smart thoughtful ways, developing tools and strategies that if implemented will not only promote economic growth but help to maintain and reinforce the character and community vibrancy so valued by it's residents.

The EDC is hopeful, once the goals and strategies noted above have been accomplished it will greatly benefit the town in it's effort to combat Groton's immediate and long term fiscal realities.