

February 18, 2016

Board of Selectmen
Mark Haddad, Town Manager
Town Hall
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Members of the Board of Selectmen & Town Manager Haddad,

There appears to be an item on the Selectmen's Agenda for next Monday regarding the preparation of an Economic Development Plan by the Economic Development Committee (EDC). It should be noted there is already in place an Economic Development Plan contained in the 2011 Master Plan (attached). While there have been some on-the-ground developments since the Master Plan adoption, the Economic Development Committee has undertaken a process to update the focus and the economic development priorities facing the Town (a working draft is attached). Additionally the EDC has undertaken a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) Analysis (attached) as a tool to further navigate the Town's future Economic Development pathway. We are also in the final stages of issuing a permitting guide to demystify the permitting process and assist applicants in identifying what permits are required, what the process involves and who to contact. The Guide is currently under review by the EDC and the Planning Board.

From what we understand, the proposed charge to the EDC is to perform a build out analysis of existing Business and Manufacturing zoned property and to project resultant potential tax revenue. This is a task that if it were to be done properly would require expertise in zoning, property valuation, development, and fiscal impact analysis as well as considerable person hours. For the EDC to undertake such a task, professional assistance -- outside of the EDC members -- will be required. The benefits of such an exercise are limited as a build out analysis will also offer only a one-dimensional perspective as it would not take into consideration the market realities, indirect fiscal impacts and benefits, and public sentiment. Suffice it to say the economic development priorities/considerations identified by the EDC offer much food for thought as the Town contemplates its economic future.

Finally, as you can see from the foregoing as well as the attachments, we have been busy. We would hope that any significant change of course or assignment, for the EDC, would be prefaced with a discussion among the Selectmen and all EDC members. To that end, we invite you to join us at our next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 5:30 PM, in your room, to discuss the possibilities.

On behalf of the EDC,

Michael G. Rasmussen, Chair