

Groton Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes 7/26/2016

Attendees for EDC: Russell Burke, Mike Rasmussen, Art Prest, Gina Cronin, Fay Raynor, and John Konetzny

Non-EDC members in attendance: Barry Pease, Anna Eliot, Greg Sheldon

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Mike Rasmussen at 6:35 PM at Groton Town Hall.

1. Introduced new members, Fay and Gina.
2. Art reviewed the EDC Charge for 2016, updated from 2011.
3. Reviewed process for businesses to come to Groton. Currently, if business will be over 10,000 sq ft, it requires rezoning and needs to be approved through town meeting with 2/3 vote. EDC's concern: developers do not want to get involved with rezoning, making it difficult to attract new business to town. The EDC feels this may not be legal and should not be the process. The EDC would like to bring this to town meeting to review along with the Planning Boards agenda.
4. Art feels it is important to educate Groton residents on the importance of economic development in the town and how this process mentioned above (Concept Plan Approval) can negatively affect the town because developers can be turned away from the process. Art's vision of Groton is ecotourism. Currently the tax liability on the residents is 94% which he feels it too high. The town of Lenox, MA is 77%.
5. The EDC is very excited for the future of Groton with the Indian Hill Music School coming on Old Ayer Road along with the Groton Inn reopening at some point in the future. A 6% room tax on lodging is currently being proposed which could bring upwards of \$150,000 in tax revenue to the town per year.
6. Gina is concerned with how few people go to town meetings and hears residents ask why Groton doesn't bring more businesses to town. There needs to be more education for residents.
7. The EDC discussed the possibility of adding an article to the Fall town meeting agenda to repeal the rezoning law process to voice our concerns to the town of the negative impact it can have and get feedback from residents on what others may think and what their concerns could be.
8. Anna Eliot informed us that the town is reapplying for a grant for "four corners". The town should hear back by October. The town applied last year and was not successful. The group in charge of the grant visited the four corners property and know much of it has sat unoccupied for 14 years.
9. Greg questioned whether the four corners property should be business or residential. Brief discussion with no outcome.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by John Konetzny