

Groton Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes 9/22/2016

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

Non-EDC members in attendance: Anna Elliot

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Mike Rasmussen at 6:10 PM at Groton Town Hall.

1. Approved previous meeting minutes.
2. Art added a vision statement to the EDC Charge and the committee reviewed.
3. Motion was passed to have Gina and Fay work together to rewrite the vision statement based on the ideas discussed in the meeting. The committee agreed the vision statement should be part of the charge.
4. The committee discussed the economic development section of the Groton Master Plan and reviewed the goals and objectives of the EDC.
5. Fay brought up looking at vacant land in town and think about what businesses might be a good fit for that specific location. Discussed the potential for matching land with business. Fay also discussed thinking about what businesses would be appropriate for the town. Ones that could compliment other businesses.
6. Anna Elliot brought up the idea of meeting with neighborhoods around certain areas of commercial properties and speaking with the residents to see what their ideas are for the land use.
7. Art stated that only 2% of Groton is zoned commercial.
8. The committee discussed the sewer capacity of downtown and Four Corners.
9. The EDC committee reviewed the talking points to be discussed at the Planning Board meeting.

7:45 PM: The EDC took brief recess to go upstairs to the Planning Board meeting

Attendees for Planning Board: Russell Burke, George Barringer (telephone), John Giger, Carolyn Perkins and Scott Wilkins. Laurie Bonavita, Groton, MA Land Use Director.

10. At 8:05, Mike spoke to the Planning Board and explained the EDC is in favor of getting rid of Concept Plan Approval as long as there are safety nets in place to protect the town.
11. Russ read excerpts from the case *Wright v. Bellingham*: the courts had decided that Concept Plan Approval was not legal.
12. Laurie Bonavita feels there are ample protections in place to protect the town if Concept Plan Approval was no longer in place. She stated that it first goes to the Land Use Committee then to the Planning Board to get preliminary feedback. After this, Laurie reviews the application before it even gets filed by the applicant. This process is in place so the town gets the highest quality plans. In addition to this, the town overlay district lays out very specific guidelines and suggestions of what the town is looking for. The developer will take this to their builder and architect. She feels town meeting is not the place to make decisions like this because you never know who will show up to the meeting.

13. John Giger also stated that if a developer is looking to develop in any of the 3 overlay districts or if looking at a historic building, the developer also must go through the Historic Commission.
14. Carolyn Perkins reviewed the zoning regulations that are in place to protect the town.
15. The Planning Board feels the protections are in place to get rid of Concept Plan Approval but are open to adding more protections if individuals think it is necessary.
16. George Barringer feels we should bring up the demise of Concept Plan Approval at the Spring or Fall 2017 town meeting.
17. John Giger feels it is important to educate residents on the legality of Concept Plan Approval.
18. The Planning Board and EDC will work together on this going forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by John Konetzny