

Groton Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes 11/30/2016

Attendees for EDC: Russell Burke, Mike Rasmussen, Art Prest, Gina Cronin, John Konetzny and Josh Degen.

Non EDC attendees: Anna Elliot and Greg Sheldon

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Mike Rasmussen at 6:05 PM at Groton Town Hall.

1. The EDC approved prior week's meeting minutes. The EDC is tabling passing the meeting minutes from 2 meetings ago because the meeting minute taker, Carol, is not present.
2. The EDC discussed that bringing the possibility of a repeal of the Concept Plan Approval to the Fall 2017 town meeting was the goal.
3. The Planning Board is 100% onboard of repealing Concept Plan Approval. Art mentioned that developers are turned away from towns that have Concept Plan Approval. Most of the time they look at other towns where they don't have to go to town meeting to get more than 2/3 vote. Josh feels 98% of protections are in place and we just need to make sure the other 2% are in place for Fall 2017. Russ feels the planning board agrees with 98% of protections being in place. Russ also stated that with town zoning bylaws, there are different districts in town and certain businesses are not even allowed in certain districts. An example being Shaws couldn't be downtown. There are other bylaws that don't allow neon signs and certain types of lighting on the signs. There is also a committee to review and approve signs before they are installed.
4. Russ explained that towns need to remain strong when potential businesses are looking to come into town. National chains will alter their signs to be approved by the town but they would rather stick with their logo as much as possible for brand recognition for fear of losing clients. It is important for towns to not be afraid of losing tax revenue and give in.
5. Art asked Russ if he thought the Shaws complex would be approved today with all the protections in place, Russ felt the answer was most likely not.
6. The EDC talked about Shaws complex and how there are additional pads still to be built. Josh feels the designs that would need to be brought forward would need to dress up the area and connect the different buildings making it more pedestrian friendly.
7. The EDC plans to speak with Bob and Dennis LaCombe about the Shaws property.
8. Mike asked Anna and Josh what they felt the Selectman would like to see on 12/19 when the EDC presents to the Selectman. They felt goals for 2017 was the most important. It will then be important to work towards those goals for them to track progress.
9. Josh feels the 16 acre property on Sandy Hill Road is low hanging fruit. It is important to try and talk to the real estate group of the property owner, New England Power Co.
10. The EDC feels the priorities for the next 12 months are CPA repeal, review zoning maps and "cherry pick" specific businesses, build relationships in town and educate residents of the EDC.
11. Greg brought up all the "product" Groton has in town. It is a very unique town. The Indian Hill Music School (2019), the new Temple being built, the Inn being built, the Nashua River, rail trail, farm stands, ect. We could package it all up marketing Groton as the destination, quintessential,

New England community. We could have a calendar listing all the things to do and see in town each month and partner with local businesses for help. Businesses would be on board to help with this because it brings in more businesses.

12. The EDC talked about a church being for sale on Main Street. What potential uses for the building could be.
13. The EDC discussed that the school system may not renew their lease of the Prescott School in 2017. The EDC plans to reach out to Evans on the Common in Townsend again to see if they are still interested. The committee agreed to have Mike reach out.
14. Gina and Art will present to the Selectman on 12/19.
15. Josh brought up that GELD is looking to sell their old building and there is a rumor Buckingham Bus may be interested in it.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by John Konetzny