

# Groton Economic Development Committee

## Meeting Minutes 3/8/2017

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

**Minutes:**

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

1. The EDC reviewed previous meeting minutes from 2/8 and discovered one amendment that needed to be made to number 2. Russ made a motion to approve the amended 2/8 minutes, Mike 2<sup>nd</sup> it, all in favor.
2. Halsey Platt needed to postpone coming to speak with the EDC.
3. John Amaral, developer of the Groton Inn spoke to the EDC. He said he has heard from others that Groton is a tough town to do business in but feels it's no more difficult than other towns. He feels developers need to build into their plans how long the developing will take including pulling all the appropriate permits. John said the Inn plans for about 45% of occupancy to come from corporations that have meetings, conferences and retreats. He feels the Groton Inn provides a much different experience than surrounding hotels. He said there will be a 100-seat banquet hall that can be divided into 2. The hall will also be used for smaller weddings. He mentioned that because of the size, there should be no competition with Gibbet Hill, a local restaurant and wedding venue that accommodates larger parties. John has heard the Inn may have a skating rink in the winter. He sees Groton as a destination town for food and outdoor activities and he sees the Inn feeding business to other local businesses in town.
4. Art asked John how he felt about Concept Plan Approval in town. John said he does not support it and feels removing it would be in the best interest for the town. He feels there are already the necessary bylaws in town to protect Groton. John said the drawings of the restaurant at the Inn are awesome.
5. John talked about how Groton residents who are business owners would love to bring their businesses to town if the opportunity arose. John and Mike talked about how Groton residents would be the best ones to open businesses in town because they take great pride in the business they are opening and want to keep Groton a quintessential New England town. They will be respectful of town bylaws.
6. John stated he would like the EDC to continue to educate residents about the advantages of having local businesses in town. It improves quality of life being able to drive 5 minutes to get the things you need. He sees the Inn opening in March 2018.
7. Josh told the EDC he would speak at town meeting about Concept Plan Approval as a Selectman, Economic Development Committee member and ex-planning board member. Josh is in favor of removing Concept Plan Approval.
8. Russ said he has heard the old Wong property will have a medical office building, bank, coffee shop and 3-unit retail. Russ feels the plans from South Coast have significantly improved and it will have a very nice look to it.
9. Matt Evans is scheduled to come to the March 22<sup>nd</sup> EDC meeting. Mike is going to try and reschedule to have him come to the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting because Art will not be able to attend the March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. If Matt can't attend April 5<sup>th</sup>, we will keep him scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>.
10. Art will reach out to Micky Higgins and Frank Hartnett and invite to the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

11. Gina will be on the agenda for the March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting to discuss the EDC website.
12. The EDC members will continue to work on confirming the businesses that are in their zones in Groton.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM. The next meeting is scheduled for 3/22/2017.

Respectfully submitted by John Konetzny