

September 9, 2018 EDC Minutes (approved 10/3/18)

Call to order 6:05 pm

Town Hall First Floor Conference Room

Present:

Alison Manugian, John Sopka (please check and fix spelling), Mike Rasmussen (Chair), Russ Burke, Chris Furcollo (not yet sworn in)

Judy Anderson, Art Prest, Anna Elliot (arrived 6:20)

Absent: Rob Foley

### Discussion of past review of Groton as a Business Community

Permitting Guide

Past meeting around permitting difficulty in Groton - consensus that town processes and permits are appropriately difficult

Comments and ideas were presented by each individual present. Ideas mentioned by a previous speaker are not repeated here. Consensus ultimately is that we need to review our charge, mission and vision in conjunction with the Select Board.

Mike - Groton currently in change

good projects underway

residential growth likely to continue over commercial development

previous intent that commercial tax would replace residential

Ideas for EDC to consider

Tax base needs and growth

Quality of life

Unique offerings - Groton Resources

Alison - EDC could focus on Communication in four categories

**Community** - promote and encourage the development of Groton's commercial tax base

*Tax Realities - inc. meals and room taxes*

*Supporting Local Businesses*

**New Business Owners** - engage new businesses to establish, invest and grow in Groton

*Permitting*

*Regulations overview and updated guide to the process*

*Introductions to staff and community support members*

*Opportunities - existing parcels and needs*

*Community Preferences and Demographics from Survey results*

*Include some historic and possible projected directions*

**Existing Business Owners** - promote, support and expand our local business community

*Regulations and operations*

*Opportunities to expand, publicize and better serve community*

**Visitors** - to enhance the character, culture and commerce of Groton as a destination community

*Restaurants, Groton Inn & B&Bs, Hiking, Boating, Biking, Horseback, Indian Hill)*

EDC should understand changes and needs of committee prior to going to SB

Need to be clear internally as to when we are proactive and when we are reactive

John -

Groton is outgrowing way business has been done in the past

increased level of acrimony around businesses and municipal decision-making -

EDC can model and push for more civil discussions

need for significant improvement around communication of what's proposed and why

people are more likely go be/get upset than work for consensus

people are not well informed (often with good intentions)

Chris -

add making recommendations to EDC responsibilities

**EDC should be a scalpel not a broad sword**

standardized economic criteria for discussion and communication around new projects  
we need to stick to the economic criteria not the more nebulous items  
Need to clarify committees, domains and roles for everyone to understand  
Need to understand differing needs of experienced developers and relatively uninformed folks with an idea permitting something for the first time

- Russ - Need to decide awareness, communication and visibility in the community of EDC  
Real Estate is a difficult high-risk project/topic under any circumstance  
Property owners are not well informed as they purchase and own property  
**We need to set realistic expectations for what EDC can accomplish**  
**We are a volunteer committee with no substantive staff support, with no budget**  
**We have no control over the free-hand of the market place**  
**Increased communication with other boards**  
Fiscal impact is not a legitimate consideration for boards involved in permitting etc.  
(actual legitimate criteria are called out in the bylaws based on committee)

**Public Input:**

- Art - Five year financial plan anticipates revenue shortfall in 2020 and beyond  
Significant project upcoming that we are not on top of  
(DPW, Library, Prescott, Flo Ro, Override)  
Groton needs a standing committee to generate revenue ideas - could this be EDC?  
Groton has no way to increase revenue without increasing residential taxes  
Anticipates need to rezone properties to create opportunity and tax revenue  
EDC needs to have a clear guideline around process and ideas such as the idea of over-55 housing around country club

Anna - Will this committee make a recommendation/statement around the request to extend sewer to the Lindemer property? This is a good question for future considerations. Process and ideas, order of operations and time frames for public steps.

Judy - Where and how is the permitting guide available to citizens?

**Anna - Formal request - Master Planning Implementation Committee to be put on the next agenda to review the EDC section of the Master Plan.**

Questions of Donelans reuse and Bank of America parcels.

Next meeting 10/3/18 6pm tentatively

7:25 -- meeting adjourned

## Past Items:

### 2011 Town of Groton Master Plan

*“Economic Development: a detailed economic profile of the town, considering its labor force characteristics, its employment base, the types of businesses operating in Groton today, and the role of agriculture and agricultural businesses in the local economy; a review of the zoning requirements that encourage or constrain commercial and industrial development; an analysis of local capacity, needs, potential opportunities, incentives, and barriers to economic growth; and recommendations to build a vital local economy.”*

### 2016 Submission to the Groton Board of Selectmen

#### **Vision:**

To enhance the character, culture and commerce of Groton Massachusetts as a destination community supporting the quintessential “New England” experience through such activities as outdoor recreation, music, arts and education for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

#### **Mission:**

**The Economic Development Committee (EDC) will work proactively to promote and encourage the development of Groton’s commercial tax base enhancing the quality of life in Groton. The EDC will promote, support and expand our local business community in addition to engaging new business to establish, invest and grow in Groton. An expanded business community will offer resources to town residents that will enable them to live, work and thrive in an economically forward looking and financially strong community.**

#### **Goals & Objectives:**

##### ***Growth:***

Identify, prioritize and develop economic opportunities and relationships that are sensitive to the intent of the master plan, the character and culture of Groton, which will make Groton a holistic and exceptional community in which residents can live, work and thrive while visitors can engage and enjoy Groton as a destination community for recreation, music, arts and education.

##### ***Education:***

Ensure the community, local businesses, committees and outside interested parties are easily connected to information and tools that facilitate the role and mission of the Economic Development Committee in Groton. Provide accessible information relative to past, present and future policies and other information that reinforce the importance and benefits of Economic Development and identifies Groton as being business friendly.

##### ***Communication:***

Provide communication plans to various audiences to promote Groton as a place to visit, enjoy and which to invest.

##### ***Regulation:***

Review current regulations and/or policies through the lens of economic development, as well as facilitate and support modification of existing policies and/or development of new policies that will promote existing or new businesses to grow and stay in Groton.

# December 2017 Projects Presentation to Select Board

## **Mission:**

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) will work proactively to promote and encourage the development of Groton's commercial tax base enhancing the quality of life in Groton. The EDC will promote, support and expand our local business community in addition to engaging new business to establish, invest and grow in Groton. An expanded business community will offer resources to town residents that will enable them to live, work and thrive in an economically forward looking and financially strong community.

## **Ongoing Projects:**

- Website Launch
- Meetings with potential business owners interested in Groton
- Survey regarding Businesses and Economic Development (data collected – analysis ongoing)
- Update Groton Businesses Map
- Identification of & Presentation regarding Comm./Ind. Zoned Parcels and Opportunities
- Update Permitting Guide & Create Business Welcome Package (Map and Permitting Guide)
- Expand partnership with Groton Board of Trade and Local Business Owners
- Continue to monitor and make recommendations regarding Cannabis in Massachusetts

## **Education/Communication:**

**Community** - promote and encourage the development of Groton's commercial tax base

- Tax Realities
- Supporting Local Businesses
- Meals Tax
- Room Tax

**New Business Owners** - engage new businesses to establish, invest and grow in Groton

- Permitting
  - Regulations
  - Guide to the process
  - Introductions to staff
- Opportunities
- Community Preferences

**Existing Business Owners** - promote, support and expand our local business community

- Regulations - signage etcf
- Opportunities

**Visitors** - to enhance the character, culture and commerce of Groton as a destination community

- Restaurants
- Groton Inn & B&Bs
- Hiking
- Boating
- Biking
- Horseback
- Indian Hill