

**Economic Development Committee
Minutes of January 25, 2016
2nd Floor Conference Room, Town Hall**

Present: Alison Hughes, Tony Archinski, Jesse Forcier (arrived 6:40 p.m.), Jim Duggan, Town Manager, Betsy Ware, Community Development Director and Recording Secretary Shannon Rowe

Absent: Frank Antifonario

Mrs. Hughes opened the meeting at 6:07p.m.

Jay Donovan, NMCOC – Dracut Economic Development Plan

Mr. Donovan presented a memorandum to the Committee dated January 25, 2016 responding to comments Mr. Donovan received regarding the “draft” Economic Development Strategy. Mr. Donovan reviewed and explained the memorandum point by point.

Point #1 & Point #2 – Mr. Donovan explained his points and Ms. Ware agreed that a footnote in the strategy would work fine.

Point #3 – Mr. Donovan stated that there are two major employers in Dracut; Hannaford and Verizon. Mr. Donovan explained that certain companies will not provide their local number of employees. Mr. Donovan discussed needing the employee numbers for Brox Industries to include in the strategy. Mr. Duggan stated that he would get the numbers from Brox Industries for full and part-time employees.

Mrs. Hughes stated that the numbers are easier to read in a table in the strategy and discussed possibly listing the company’s telephone numbers and information regarding the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Duggan discussed creating a business survey and advertising businesses on the Town’s website.

Ms. Ware discussed creating a master list of businesses with questions for the survey.

Mrs. Hughes discussed the need to show more business’ if they want to attract business’.

The Committee discussed local companies and the number of their employees in Dracut.

Point #4 – Ms. Ware stated that her comment was in regards to using terms as empty nesters, etc., may not be good terms to use in the strategy.

Mr. Donovan stated that they are referencing the housing section and want this Economic Development Strategy Plan to help bring businesses to Dracut. Mr. Donovan stated that people want to know housing prices, etc.

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Mr. Archinski stated that Ms. Ware wants the Plan to be politically correct.

Mr. Donovan stated that he would revise the Plan.

Point #5 – Ms. Ware stated that she was concerned with the recommendation at the end of the Plan for a permitting ombudsman. Ms. Ware stated that she was o.k. with the language of page 75 of the plan.

Mr. Donovan explained that a permitting ombudsman is to help with permit streamlining and gives people a contact to refer to.

Ms. Ware stated that she has an issue with the current wording of a permitting ombudsman.

Mr. Donovan explained that a permitting ombudsman is just to help people as a point person and explained the purpose of having someone be a point person.

Point #6 – Mr. Donovan stated that he would try to get the information from a local banker.

Point #7 – Mr. Donovan explained the terminology of the Dracut High Technology ETA.

Point #8 – Mr. Donovan stated that historical preservation is a large part of Economic Development and referred to a memorandum dated December 28, 2012 from Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. to the Dracut Historical Commission.

Mr. Duggan discussed historical areas in Dracut. Mr. Donovan discussed building on development of historical areas.

Mr. Duggan discussed his past experiences with Historic Districts.

Mr. Donovan provided a map titled Dracut Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts and stated that the map included the November 2015 Town Meeting zoning changes.

Mr. Donovan provided the Committee with an email from Carlin Andrus dated January 25, 2016 regarding Fiber Optic lines in the region. Mr. Donovan stated that included in the email is a map which shows Lighttower Network fiber optic lines going through Dracut and Methuen.

Mr. Duggan stated that Verizon is not interested in bringing Fiber Optic to Dracut.

Mrs. Hughes discussed removing Fiber Optic from the Plan as they can't advertise for something that they don't have.

Mr. Donovan presented the Committee with a "draft" Economic Development Strategy dated January 2016 and stated that he added information to the Executive Summary, Table of Contents and the changes with the Town Hall's coming together.

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Mrs. Hughes reviewed the changes to the “draft” Plan from the last meeting.

Mrs. Hughes discussed using Ms. Ware’s suggestion of having an addendum to not hold Mr. Donovan up and the addendum could always be revised when needed.

Mrs. Hughes stated that they are working on developing an Economic Development website which would be linked to the Town’s website.

Betsy Ware, Community Development Director – Mass Downtown Initiative Grant

Ms. Ware stated that eight weeks ago she applied for a \$10,000 Grant which would target Economic Development for the corner of Lakeview Avenue and Pleasant Street through the Department of Housing and Community Development. Ms. Ware stated that the State hires a consultant that she would work with and she should be hearing about the Grant within the next month. Ms. Ware explained that the consultant would come in June/July and offer a number of suggestions.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Archinski to approve the Minutes of June 25, 2014. Motion seconded by Mr. Forcier. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mr. Forcier to approve the Minutes of March 9, 2015. Motion seconded by Mr. Archinski.

Motion made by Mrs. Hughes to approve the Minutes of May 18, 2015. Motion seconded by Mr. Archinski. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mrs. Hughes to approve the Minutes of June 29, 2015. Motion seconded by Mr. Archinski. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mrs. Hughes to approve the Minutes of September 28, 2015. Motion seconded by Mr. Archinski. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mrs. Hughes to approve the Minutes of November 16, 2015. Motion seconded by Mr. Archinski. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting was scheduled for February 29, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Motion made by Mr. Forcier to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Archinski. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

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Alison Hughes
Alison Hughes

Tony Archinski
Tony Archinski

ABSENT
Frank Antifonario

Jesse Forcier
Jesse Forcier