



TOWN of NEEDHAM  
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
**Economic Development**  
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**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS**  
**WEDNESDAY, March 6, 2013 7:30 AM**  
**Charles River Room PSAB**

Present: Matt Talcoff, Chair; Glen Cammarano; Tom Jacob; Bob Hentschel; Marty Jacobs;  
Elizabeth Grimes; Bruce Herman; Brian Nadler; and Devra Bailin  
Not Present: Walter Collins; Matt Borrelli; Janet O'Connor; Bill Day; Damon Borrelli; Michael Wilcox;  
Moe Handel  
Also Present: Paul Good, John Fantasia, and Bob Larson

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of February 6th.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting and Hearing Dates

The next meeting date is April 3rd. Our future meetings will continue to be held on the first Wednesday of each month, unless it is a holiday. All meetings will be in the Charles River Room at PSAB.

III. Update on Needham Crossing

Devra explained that the copies of the logos sent out from Mike Panagako were emailed and she had received comments from a few people, mostly who didn't like any of the options. Of the options provided, only A and E received positive feedback from more than one person. Devra explained that the black and white version was from Bob Larson, whom Moe asked to take a look at the work. Matt thought the "s" looked like tire tracks and too similar to Sullivan Tire logo. Devra noted that many people commented that E looked like the Hyatt logo; Liz thought it looked like a bar code.

Tom asked whether we were looking for the logo just for the office park or entire area. Paul commented that he thought it was meant to cover the entire area (which is confirmed, Devra noted, by the CEA's recommendation to the BOS). Paul noted that he felt the area should have the same "Welcome to Needham" signage at other entrances to Town but that logo signage would be for the entrance to the Park. He said that none of the logos captured the three different elements present in the area and didn't express the crossing of all elements. Tom wondered whether the logo will be incorporated into the street or directional signage; Devra noted that is certainly an issue for the streetscape of the area. Devra reminded the members that the businesses made clear that they will not

likely use the logo—they will identify their buildings by principal tenants but may use “\_\_\_ at Needham Crossing.” Glen said that he doubted they would use the logo at all.

Marty commented that he was no more thrilled with the logos than he was with the name. Liz liked the font on E and would partner it with A, if she had to choose now. Brian thought D was the best of the bunch; Devra said that people thought it looked like the mark of Zorro. Members noted that Bob Larson thought C was the best of the bunch but, to many, it evoked General Cinema’s old logo. Devra raised the issue of whether we wanted to get public input. Paul explained 99 Designs, which allows a person to offer a prize and 99 Designs puts it out to 40-50 designers. You send in a description of what you are trying to do and the designers compete for the prize.

Bruce suggested sending it to the High School, which was received positively by the members. Matt T. said to send it to all schools. Tom asked if we were sending it out with the promise of prize; it was not thought necessary. As Bob noted, the winner will have the satisfaction of having the design on the logo. Devra will send the request out with the criteria sought to be expressed and the unique attributes of the area. It was decided not to call it a prize contest but rather an invitation to submit ideas for the logos. It was decided to ask for submissions by the end of April. Bruce said that we need to make clear that it is the name that is being promoted and we don’t want the logo to take over.

Bob Larson spoke to the members and said that he thought that the name should have the same font for both “Needham” and “Crossing” and that was a problem with many of the samples. Having the same font helps tie the words together, which is what we want. He thought the “NC” logo—alternative C—suggesting as it does a road and passageway linked together, is fairly good. It was also easily identifiable. Members thanked him for coming and expressed the view that they were grateful for his explanation and guidance. Bob was asked what he thought about sending it to the schools for ideas and he said it was a great idea. He said that the High School had a very good graphic arts program.

[After the meeting, Devra emailed David Neves and Linda Burke and asked if the schools would be interested in submitting ideas for the logo design for “Needham Crossing”, incorporating the name and some sort of symbol reflecting the area. She sent them a copy of the Naming Recommendations Memo given by the CEA to the BOS, as well as the List of Amenities and Unique Qualities of the NEBC. Dave responded that he thought it sounded like an interesting project and cc’ed all NHS visual art teachers. He thought it might readily fit into existing classes, as logo design is actually incorporated into many of the art classes. He also thought it might be something the Visual Art Society might take on as a project. He also said that he will bring it to the attention of all art teachers as they were meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup>. He thought the end of April might be challenging but will get feedback from the teachers. Devra expects to hear from him within a week or two.]

#### IV. Update on Retail Alcohol Sales

The members discussed the Downtown location approved by the BOS—Needham Center Wine and Spirits at 1013 Great Plain Avenue (old Crest Building), which is a boutique type store whose owner has another store in Somerville. It will offer wine, beer, cheese, cigars in an upscale store. Concern was expressed over the number of stores permitted, when, based on our analysis, the Town could support two, in addition to the grocery stores (viewed more as convenience locations). Bob noted that the owners who were successful were surprised by the number of licenses approved; they were not

expecting so much competition. Paul thought that this was the opportunity to select the broad spectrum of retail alcohol outlets; he thought it spread the use throughout all areas of Town and created balance in type of operation. Liz thought the rent being paid in the Downtown (\$13,000 for 2000 sq. ft.) would make it very difficult for that owner to compete.

#### V. Discussion of Zoning Initiatives for Annual Town Meeting

Devra noted that, although she told the Planning Board that the Mixed Use-128 Zoning (both dimensional amendments and residential overlay) is a high priority for the CEA and that they had initiated the zoning, the Planning Board has asked for a letter from the CEA demonstrating their support for the changes in dimensional zoning. Devra noted that work on the Residential Overlay has not been completed and that those provisions will not be going forward at this time. The Planning Department is engaging Phil Herr to advise and redraft the proposal. Tom asked whether we can send such a letter without BOS approval, since we are advisory to the BOS. Devra will contact Kate and find out. [Devra emailed Kate, who contacted the BOS, who advised that the CEA may send such a letter and indicated that the BOS will send its own letter supporting the dimensional changes.] Marty noted that one member of the Planning Board is only seeking to confirm that there is support for the zoning.

Simon Boyd had written an email to the Planning Board expressing his view that the Planning Board should remove the FAR requirement. Devra explained that she told the Planning Board that this is precisely what the CEA heard from Mike Boujoulia when we were studying the NEBC: that the FAR precluded smaller lots from reaching the full build-out. The FAR doesn't add clarity; if a project complies with setbacks, open space and height, that should be enough. Devra said that she tried to argue that in context of NEBC and the Planning Board would not agree, so the CEA decided not to press the issue at the time. The Planning Board took Simon's objection as an objection to the dimensional changes; Devra assured them that that was not the case. Devra requested that Simon send a clarifying letter to the Planning Board, which he has done. Bob expressed his agreement with Simon's argument; if you meet the area, frontage, setback, height and parking requirements, the FAR just gets in the way and should be removed as an unnecessary restriction on development. Tom suggested we deal with the FAR issue in the future.

#### VI. Go Red for Women

Devra explained that, although this was not very well attended (maybe 50 people), the merchants and restaurants were pleased with the publicity and red balloons. Plans for next year include invitations to more possible participants and a blood drive.

#### VII. Discussion of Sign By-Law Amendments

Devra explained that the draft provided is the result of work with the Design Review Board and David Roche to streamline the process for sign approvals. Basically, we all agree that an applicant should be able to find out if he/she requires a special permit, or if he/she knows he/she does, that he/she should be able to apply for the special permit, serve the notice of hearing, and be heard by the DRB at one hearing rather than going twice to DRB. The DRB has also agreed to allow a blade sign as of right in addition to the allowed wall sign and to provide a standard for all sandwich signs. We will be

discussing increasing signage along Route 128 with the owners group. The draft includes changes requested by the Planning Board. Bob Hentschel, Dave Roche, Mark Gluesing and Devra presented the Sign By-Law, draft regulations for street banners, and definition of “public entertainment” to the Board of Selectmen at a hearing on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Devra will incorporate comments from the BOS members into the draft. The CEA voted to lend its support to the changes. Marty asked about enforcement and Paul asked if the Building Inspector is really the right person to do. Devra said she has been discussing these changes with the merchants and restaurants. Once the draft is completed, Paul will post it on the NBA website.

#### VIII. Discussion of Ideas for Promoting/Assisting with Local First

Devra asked the members to think about this issue, which they have made a priority for this year. Devra noted that the Needham Merchants Association will be sponsoring the Adirondack Chair event again in September and a new event Needham Goes Pink for breast cancer in October. The program will run all month with a benefit at the close of the month. It was suggested that the merchants approach Janet to see if Roche Bros. will collect \$1 or 2 at its registers for the charity chosen (to be established by the BID Needham to support services to breast cancer patients or screening services to those who cannot afford them). [Devra relayed this suggestion to the co-Chairs of the event.]

#### IX. Update on Downtown Subcommittee

It was discussed that one of the priorities for the CEA next year is to move on the streamlining initiatives which came to light during the discussions with the landlords in the Downtown. As the CEA advised Lee last month subcommittee members or a representative of the subcommittee would be happy to attend. Marty noted that Lee met with the Board on this, presented the members with a memorandum on streamlining suggestions, and there was a discussion about it. Devra noted that she was not aware of any memorandum or that discussions had taken place. The CEA members felt this needed to be an open dialogue.

#### X. Food Trucks

Due to time constraints, this topic was not discussed.

#### XI. Other Business

Marty asked if the CEA planned to take any position on the mj moratorium. Liz pointed out that these uses could have impacts on existing businesses which the CEA would want to study. It was voted by the CEA members still present (with Marty abstaining) that the CEA should support the moratorium to permit study.

#### XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 a.m.