



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development
781-455-7550 x213

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
WEDNESDAY, February 6, 2013 7:30 AM
Charles River Room PSAB

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

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of January 9th.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting and Hearing Dates

The next meeting date is March 6th. 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. Naming NEBC and Next Steps

Devra explained that, as the members know, the Board of Selectmen adopted the recommendation of the CEA that the name be "Needham Crossing". Devra spoke to the marketing consultant, Mike Panagako, who will proceed to create logo, tagline, and branding options for the Subcommittee's and CEA's review. He did not feel any additional meetings were required. Once the CEA has reviewed, it will forward its recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

Matt T. asked whether we wanted to create a contest for the logo etc. as suggested by one of the members of the BOS. Moe noted that, if we did so, we would have to be careful to credit the idea. He added that he felt there was a difference between a long-term effective logo and one that is popular today. Liz thought this was not necessary and would undercut our reason for hiring a professional. It was agreed to proceed with Mike's group. Glen noted that the signage along Route 128 and within the Park is too small to be helpful. Devra commented that signage for the new Needham Crossing was part of the contract so we should get some ideas from the consultant. She also noted that she is working to draft Sign By-Law changes, which we will discuss later.

IV. Update on Retail Alcohol Sales

Moe reported that the Board of Selectmen held hearings on all ten retail alcohol sales applications on February 2nd and voted on February 5th to approve five. Moe explained that the BOS approved two boutique stores, one package store, one accessory wine shop, and one warehouse operation. The BOS approved the following applications: 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; Vinodivino at 922 Highland Avenue (CVS/Trader Joes Plaza in Heights); Volante Farms for wine and beer only at 292 Forest Street, as accessory to their other food products; Needham Wine and Spirits at 1257 Highland Avenue (at former Wild Willies location), which will be a traditional package store; and Bin Ends at 65 Crawford Street, which has an operation in Braintree, is basically a warehouse-type operation and has regional implications. The BOS did not prohibit sales of lottery tickets or tobacco. They also didn't prohibit signs in the windows but gave strict instructions to applicants that they needed to comply with temporary signage requirements in the By-Law.

Devra asked whether the BOS resolved the beer issue with respect to Volante Farms, as Dave Roche doesn't want to be placed in the middle. Moe explained that under the alcohol statute, the BOS couldn't restrict license to wine only, even though under zoning Dave Tobin has concluded that under Volante's exempt status they cannot sell beer. This may become a zoning enforcement issue, as Volante's counsel doesn't agree with Town Counsel's interpretation.

Lee asked about delivery restrictions. Moe explained that the BOS has no right to regulate that issue. Lee explained that as to some of these locations, since there is no site plan and the use is allowed by right under zoning, there is no way to limit or direct deliveries. She noted that on the Wild Willies site the Planning Department received numerous complaints about dumpster pickup and other noise issues. Vinodivino will have to comply with site plan requirements and Moe noted that neighbors supported the application.

Moe noted that there is one license left to give—in four years there will be two additional ones. Matt asked if there were any particular reasons for turning down the other applicants over the ones granted and Glen asked if there were any major players who were turned down. Moe said both Gordon's and Blanchard's were denied licenses, mostly due to locations proposed. Other applicants were turned down to lack of experience. It was noted that Trader Joes will likely not seek a license with Vinodivino being in the plaza.

V. Discussion of Zoning Initiatives for Annual Town Meeting

It was noted that Mixed Use-128 Zoning both dimensional amendments and residential overlay is a high priority for the CEA. Devra discussed these with the Planning Board on January 22nd. The Board agreed to move forward with the dimensional changes but opted to publish for hearing a version which called for a special permit for any height over 70'. The residential overlay, Lee explained, will be sent to Phil Herr for analysis, guidance and input. It will be put on the Special Town Meeting Warrant rather than the Annual. Simon Boyd raised concern about the limitation of 1.75 FAR on lots of 50,000 sq. ft. He commented that it was too low; one couldn't get to the height permitted. It was pointed out that the draft of the residential overlay permitted FARs of 2 by special permit provided some affordable units were provided. (20-25%, for which we have received comments, including from a Planning Board member, that this is too high.) Devra noted that the draft doesn't yet include the items we discussed during the symposium, that any lots abutting the overlay which are consolidated can be brought under

the overlay's umbrella, provided that along Highland Avenue the use of the first floor is consistent with the Highland 128 corridor and the height is consistent with that zone.

In response to Simon's concern, Devra noted that this is precisely what the CEA heard from Mike Boujoulian when we were studying the NEBC: that the FAR precluded smaller lots from reaching the full build-out. Bob noted that Devra was right and why are we using this belt and suspenders approach? 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. Lee noted that the FAR is a predictor of square footage and we don't want developers to build to the maximum, especially on smaller lots. The FAR forces parcel assemblage.

Simon said that if the Town was serious about trying to shift the tax base back to the commercial side, it should encourage maximum build-out. It was agreed he would investigate his total square footage and provide that information to the Planning Department so that we can understand the maximum build-out possible on Winhall's consolidated parcels. Lee explained that the hearing on the dimensional requirements will be held on March 5th.

VI. Go Red for Women

Devra explained that February 14th is Wear Red Day in Needham and that February is the American Heart Associations Go Red for Women month. The Needham Merchants association, in conjunction with the Planning and Health Departments and the BID Needham, are sponsoring free blood pressure screenings, films and other information at Powers Hall from 1 to 5 p.m. Devra handed out flyers for members to post at their businesses, information about heart disease in women, and red dress pins. Devra said this was a health awareness campaign and many of the downtown merchants are participating by placing the flyer in the window, offering specials, and/or decorating their window in red. Devra asked members to get the word out.

VII. Discussion of Sign By-Law Amendments

Devra explained that she is working 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 also be discussing increasing signage along Route 128. These changes will be discussed with the Planning Board and then with the Board of Selectmen at a hearing on March 5th. Bob noted that the current procedure is ridiculous—no one should have to go back to the same board twice on the same issue. Moe commented that his board is supportive generally of measures to improve process.

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. Moe asked if Tedi had information about the Local First campaign to give out in her office. (Devra will

follow up with the NBA.) He also noted that information can be stuffed into Exchange Club Phonebooks. Devra noted that a calendar card and information was included in last year's book but she will follow-up with Walter Collins.

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. Lee said that the Planning Board will be taking this up. The CEA advised Lee that subcommittee members or a representative of the subcommittee would be happy to attend.

X. Other Business

Tom Jacob reported that the Downtown Streetscape Committee met and was well attended. (Moe noted he was also on the Committee but didn't get notice.) The area runs from the police station to St. Joes and from post office to Green's field. They will be looking at the public side of amenities and design. Devra asked if they will be looking at the outdoor display and furnishings issue which got put aside when the zoning for outdoor seating was done. Lee and Tom said that they would be. Tom explained that Town Engineer Tony DelGaizo had a concept plan. There was discussion of the timing of traffic lights, plantings, trees, and parking. Lee noted that they will be drawing ideas from DeNisco designs and from the design guidelines, in order to identify common elements. Members were asked to provide any ideas regarding design features to Mike McKay, who is the CEA representative, Tom Jacobs, who is the Park & Rec representative, or Lee Newman. Devra commented that when she asked this question of landlords in the Downtown, she was frequently directed to Newburyport, with its brick and historical details. Tom noted that they will also look at the possibility of undergrounding utilities. The plan is to use Chapter 90 funds, of which there are about \$2 million, and a commitment from the Town to set aside a million a year. The work will be divided into phases, probably five. The issue of planters on Chapel was raised and merchant objections to their look. The goals of the Committee are beautification, safety, parking lot/curb cut consolidation, and traffic control. Brian commented that the Committee should be sensitive to the need of the merchants and restaurants for visibility and that trees are not always the answer—better to have shrubs which don't block the buildings.

Bruce asked what input the Town has in the interchange bridges over Route 128 at Highland and at Kendrick. He was impressed with the look of the bridge over 128 at Winter Street and thought it would enhance both areas if the Town could get a similar look. Lee will raise this with Tony, Rick and Kate.

There was a discussion about why certain business locations seem to fail—former Montego Bay site and Tu Y Yo site.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.