



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development
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MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
WEDNESDAY, October 2, 2013 7:30 AM
Charles River Room PSAB

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

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of September 3, 2013.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting and Hearing Dates

Our next meeting will be on November 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. Update on Mixed Use-128 Residential Overlay

Lee explained that we have had a preliminary meeting with the consultant Phil Herr on the residential overlay for Mixed Use-128. She felt the work would be ready by the spring to move forward. She believes that an overlay might not be quite what we need (or actually want) and there was discussion with Phil about proposing more of a mixed use palette in the underlying zoning. She is working with Phil to create a scope of the work.

IV. Update on Babson Marketing Study/Plan

Devra explained that she met with the undergraduate students in MCFE program together with the graduate student who will be coordinating the Babson student efforts, Jingsi Zhang. They were very enthusiastic and asked very good questions regarding the scope and purpose of the project. They have received a copy of Hongling's work product, as well as other information about the Downtown area. At the kickoff meeting with Jingsi and the students on September 12th, Devra learned that we are one of 12 projects chosen out of 40 applications and that this is the only public project. Most of the projects relate to particular businesses or discrete problem solving exercises. We have agreed on the engagement contract; students are presently working on the background information—market analysis of our

competitors (regional shopping areas and Wellesley, Newton and Dedham local shopping areas). Next meeting is October 8th.

Devra was asked to invite the students to the Downtown Streetscape Working Group meeting with merchants on October 15th (which she did).

V. Public Meeting on Needham Crossing Logo Options

Devra explained that we now have the logo designs from the consultant (ignoring the color), the High School graphic design students submittals from Teacher Robyn Briggs, Bob Larson's take on his selection from the consultant logos, designs by David Linde, a design submitted by another High School student, and Mike Wilcox's marketing consultant's take on the project consultant's logos (giving us more context, signage and color options). Per questions asked at the last meeting, Devra reported that the Town did not utilize any particular font (per Sandy Cincotta) and showed the Highway Gothic C which she ascertained was used on Highway Signage throughout the Commonwealth on federal roads (through a sign consultant referred by Giles Ham at Vanasse). Devra noted that she felt that Mike's marketer's renderings were very helpful in distilling the concepts and how they would work. Mike said that he thought the consultant's decision to do the signage after the logo may have engendered confusion. Everyone agreed that the Bulfinch graphics were extremely helpful.

Paul noted that Welcome to Needham signage is consistent at other entries to Town—blue/gold pansy logo. It was discussed how this might not be appropriate for the urban environment being created in Needham Crossing. It might be appropriate at the River but not along commercial/business corridor/area. Tom thought there wasn't really a conflict—could do both types in Needham Crossing depending on the location of signage. Paul agreed you want a different splash to define the new business area.

Members focused on the Bulfinch graphics, which were helpful in envisioning banners, signage and colors. Devra invited Seymour Levy, a Needham resident and graphic designer, to give us his view. He noted that highway signage in Germany is DIN—a font Germany developed on the Autobahn because it is easy to read at any speed and is being used here now as well because of its easy readability. Glen questioned whether there is any particular reason to choose a font used by the highway department. Most members did not feel it was necessary. The logo design Seymour thought really sang was the Bulfinch logo with the yellow line with buildings above it—it was clean and meaningful. Paul thought the light blue used with the grey design was more appropriate to Needham than the dark navy blue (but he preferred sticking with yellow). Matt was in favor as well of the blue and yellow. Tom was not sure how this would work in Needham Center—could use the same font for Needham and Center and choose a different logo (cupola). Moe asked whether we could make a consensus recommendation or, Devra noted, like with the name, offer a couple of choices. Denise reminded the subcommittee to be mindful of the residential owners in the area—Matt thought the line with the buildings above would speak to the urban village they had in mind. Devra noted that the residents had expressed approval of two of the consultant's design, including the original buildings (which were both on top and below the line). Tom asked if it still looked like a bar code where the buildings were only above the line. Members didn't think so. Members also liked the larger font for Needham and Crossing. Mike volunteered to have his marketing person rerun the logos in blue and yellow with larger font in both the river/road design and the building above the line design.

Members felt they could make a recommendation. Top choice was the buildings above the line in lighter blue and yellow in larger font. A couple of members voted as the top choice the river and road in the same font and colors. Mike will have send the revisions to me to include in the CEA's recommendation to the BOS.

VI. Update from Downtown Streetscape Working Group

Tom explained that the group took the summer off but they are moving along rather rapidly. They are meeting with the merchants and downtown owners on October 15th to get their input. There are a number of elements to address and the Group needs to discuss the loss of certain parking spaces with the roadway improvements. They will be able to fix the long delays when the train comes through with new signal technology. Unfortunately, it cannot be fixed with existing signals. He pointed out there are a lot of signage issues. Merchants want direction into the Garden Street lot, so there should be some public parking spaces there. By October 30th meeting of the Working Group there will be a draft of the proposed streetscape. There was also discussion of the Chapel Street poles (need to underground) and plowing of entire area (and not into store backs). Devra spoke briefly about the dumpster consolidation effort with two landlords. Moe suggested the Group ask the BOS to expand its scope to include the Chapel Street lot.

VII. Update on Industrial District Subcommittee

Devra noted that this new subcommittee is starting its review with dimensional regulations in these districts. The next meeting, on October 7th, will focus on the significant number of split lots and suggestion to move the zone boundaries while making zoning changes. We will be reviewing enlarged GIS maps of the zones themselves.

VIII. Update on Downtown Subcommittee (Streamlining Suggestions)

The Downtown Subcommittee met yesterday and discussed generally issues relating to permitting which proved troublesome to landlords and tenants. It was agreed that subcommittee members would review the information gathered and each come up with a list of five top concerns. The plan is to create discrete zoning solutions to perceived problems and then meet with the Planning Board in a working session to address them.

IX. Discussion of Local First Initiatives

Devra noted that this weekend is Harvest Fair, which marks the kickoff to Needham Goes Pink.

X. Other Business

Mike pointed out that the General Dynamics' property was officially on the market. He understands they are consolidating their operation to Taunton and expect to fully move out of Needham within 1-2 years. CB is the realtor. There was much agreement that this is a very exciting opportunity and what is really needed to transform the park. There was discussion of whether we should revision the area—to which most in attendance did not think was a good idea in light of the pending sale. There was

also a discussion of what the Town would want out of the project, which most felt could potentially scare developer/purchasers. Devra noted that a project this size could certainly be a subject for contract zoning—where the developer and Town agree on what it will look like and create special zoning to accommodate a particular project. There was also discussion as to whether a project of this magnitude—26 acres—required a residential component. This issue will have to await specific proposals.

Paul noted that the Revitalization Trust Fund is looking into several projects, including wrapping of traffic control boxes. Devra pointed out that the Town is working with a High School student to paint a pilot box on Oak and Chestnut and, if there is funding for wrapping it from the Trust, that would be helpful. Devra asked Paul to let her know. Paul also noted that the Fund is raising funds for a glass etched rail (18th Century Train) to provide interest to Eaton Square. He is also working with Rice Barn to create a changeable art display on the wall facing the tracks. He's working with the Needham Art Association, Needham Open Studios and Cultural Council. A committee is being established to decide on changeable art.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20 a.m.