



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

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

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
WEDNESDAY, May 13, 2015 7:30 AM
Charles River Room PSAB

Present: Matt Talcoff, Chair; Marty Jacobs; Moe Handel; Michael Wilcox; Glen Cammarano; Tom Jacob; Bill Day; Rick Putrush; and Devra Bailin, staff
Not Present: J Peter Atallah; Bob Hentschel; Elizabeth Grimes; Janet O'Connor; Brian Nadler; Bruce Herman; Matt Borrelli; and Lee Newman, staff

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of April 1, 2015.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting Dates

Our next meeting will be on June 3rd. It was decided that we will not hold a meeting of the full Council in July and August. Subcommittees may be called to meet during the summer depending on issues which arise or projects requiring attention. Future meetings thereafter are scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month (unless a holiday) in the Charles River Room at PSAB beginning in September.

III. Update on Infrastructure Improvements in Needham Crossing

Devra explained that the MPO formally voted this month to place the Highland Avenue/Needham Street Corridor Project into the FFY 2018 TIP, as Newton and Needham requested. They also voted to move it from the 2021-2025 time band in the Long Range Transportation Plan to FFY 2016-2020 to be consistent with the first vote. Public comment now continues. This is a significant accomplishment to get the highest ranked MOP project for three years running into a fundable TIP. Moe has asked the CEA to submit a letter in support. A unanimous vote of the members was taken to support these efforts. Moe explained that, in order for Needham to get on the fundable list, another project, Walpole, had to be removed. They will have an opportunity to respond and, unfortunately, Three Rivers, of which Needham is a part, is supporting Walpole. So, we're not at final decision yet. Devra will also be forwarding a support letter to businesses and owners in the hopes that they will submit the support letter as well. Owners should get signatures from tenants. The CEA agreed that Devra should draft the support letter, which Moe will review before it is submitted.

IV. Update on Mixed Use-128 Residential Overlay

Devra provided copies of the latest zoning proposal drafted by John Connery with Devra's corrections. The draft reflects members' comments at our last meeting. Rick asked why the draft requires two acres which will make development difficult where there are so many small owners. Devra and Matt explained that this decision was made based on John's recommendations and the members' desire for larger consolidated development (like Charles River Landing) rather than interspersed small development. There was discussion of the difficulties inherent in trying to force consolidation by increasing development size and the need for economies of scale to improve the infrastructure in the area—in particular the inadequacy of the roads for access and egress. With representative members of the BOS (Moe) and Planning Board (Marty) abstaining, the other members unanimously voted to recommend adoption of the Mixed Use-128 Residential Overlay in its current draft (with the revision requested via email from Peter to insert reference to the Needham Zoning By-Law in the dimensional section). Devra will forward this recommendation on to Kate for action by the BOS.

V. Update on Industrial District Subcommittee

Devra noted that Town Meeting at the Special Town Meeting on Monday May 11th approved funding for the work this committee needs to proceed with the zoning in Industrial 1 and in the two industrial zones abutting Route 128. After completing meetings with the public in January of 2014, the committee has been waiting for the information it promised the neighborhoods before proceeding. These funds will be used to hire consultants to do build-out analyses and traffic analyses of these districts, and to do elevation drawings of the proposals so the neighborhoods could see the visual impacts. The last item may be limited to Industrial 1. There was discussion as to whether, given the timing of the availability of the funds (July 1), it will be possible to bring these proposals forward in the fall. The members will meet twice in September if that makes it possible to bring the proposal to Town Meeting in the fall.

VI. Discussion of N² and Needham Crossing Branding

The members expressed concern about not having Needham Crossing and N² on any highway signs. They want to know who we get a blue sign identifying the area. Devra and Moe will see if we can get an answer.

VII. Update on N² Innovation Corridor

Devra explained that the project is supposedly funded but not granted. The new head of the Federal Economic Development Commission advised that the project would be funded but NOT under the application we submitted (in accordance with his predecessors' instructions). We were promised an answer in sixty days and that was over 45 days ago...

VIII. Update on Babson MCFE Downtown Marketing Plan

Due to time constraints, this issue was not discussed.

IX. Update on Needham Crossing (Signage at Entrances)

Mike Wilcox advised that Tina Snyder from his office is working on the revised signage. We need to confirm ownership of the land on which the signs are proposed to be installed; Devra will check the locations on Acapulcos, Kennedy Carpet building, bridge over Charles (can it go on the bridge?), and PTC. Most of the signs will go on private property but we need to confirm that the signs proposed for Kendrick Street are not within the Town's ROW and where located on private property that they are outside the temporary or permanent takings. It was also noted that easements would be likely if the Town was placing signage on private property. Devra will ask David Tobin. We will need to seek DRB approval of the signage and secure additional funds for the fabrication and installation—perhaps from the Owners' fund. Devra will ask if signage can go on the bridge into Needham.

X. Update on Downtown Subcommittee (Streamlining Suggestions)

Due to time constraints, this issue was not discussed.

XII. Other Business

Devra advised members of another Needham business profiled in BBJ--Infinidat.

XIII. Adjourn

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