



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development
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MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
WEDNESDAY, April 6, 2016 7:30 AM
Charles River Room PSAB

Present: Matt Talcoff, Chair; Moe Handel; Michael Wilcox; Rick Putprush; Glen Cammarano; Bob Hentschel; and Devra Bailin.

Not Present: Elizabeth Grimes; Bill Day; Janet O'Connor; Brian Nadler; Tom Jacob; Peter Atallah; Marty Jacobs; Bruce Herman; and Matt Borrelli.

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of March 2, 2016.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting Dates

Our next meeting will be on May 4th. Future meetings will be scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month (unless a holiday) in the Charles River Room at PSAB. There was discussion of the result of communications with members frequently unable to attend. Moe will address with Marianne who will be in charge of appointments after the change in organization.

III. Update on Marketing for Needham Crossing

Devra has not heard back yet on our application to the Babson MCFE program to see if students are interested in moving the marketing project forward. We know we require some sort of owners association to maintain the website and provide leadership. There also needs to be a funding mechanism. Since it is a fall course, selections may not have yet been made.

Last month Devra made inquiries to PTC and Boston Properties about such signage on their property. The matter is under advisement with Boston Properties. (Oddly enough, after returning from the meeting this morning, Devra was copied on an internal email to Bryan Koop asking if he had a response.) Devra will ask David Tobin to investigate whether there is any legal impediment to putting a sign near Route 128 identifying "Needham Crossing: Gateway to N²". Devra will also contact Mark Gluesing to ascertain how large the sign would have to be to be seen from the highway and how large the DRB would permit it to be.

A question was raised last month about the Kendrick Street Bridge and whether it will be four lanes with bike and pedestrian amenities when it comes online in October 2016. Devra confirmed with

Nathan Cabral-Curtis that by the third quarter of 2016, the Bridge will have attained its final lane configuration—two eastbound and two westbound lanes over the Bridge. At the new signal for Kendrick Street there will be two eastbound lanes, one westbound, and a double left to access Route 128S. At that time two of the Bridge's four ramps will be open. On one side of the Bridge there will be bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. On the other side of the Bridge (the one eventually connecting to the collector/distributor roads to Highland Avenue), there will be a temporary condition.

Finally, there was discussion of the need to reconvene the owners in the Crossing to discuss streetscape design. Devra noted that Jamie Nicholson from Normandy is reaching out to Coca Cola. Members noted that there is an issue with trucks idling on Third Avenue, a problem which did not exist a couple of years ago. Has something changed in their distribution/operation that has resulted in the spillover to the street?

IV. Update from the Downtown Subcommittee

We still have no approval to hold public hearings regarding streamlining. Moe is still working on it.

V. Update on Mixed Use-128 Residential Overlay

The Planning Board endorsed the zoning with a change from 10% affordable to 12.5% affordable as requested by the BOS. Unfortunately Lee scheduled the presentation for next Wednesday (April 13th) before the FinCom and the BOS. Devra will be on vacation. John will be there. No member was able to attend.

As to Town Meeting, the Planning Board has asked that Devra make the presentation. As Kate needs to approve this, Moe suggested the Chair send a letter to her. (Lee said that a letter already went to Kate explaining that the Planning Board wants Devra to do the presentation and requesting permission.) Moe will look into it.

VI. Discussion of NEBC zoning restrictions (use/dimensional) interfering with development

The Planning Board approved the proposed zoning amendments with respect to the limitation on retail, restaurants and other consumer services to multistory office buildings, agreeing that such facilities be allowed on the ground floor of one-story buildings. Devra also explained that when she was working on the summary she realized that an inconsistency was introduced. As presently written, the Zoning By-Law allows indoor athletic or exercise facilities on the first floor of multistory buildings as of right and otherwise by special permit. When we took out the requirement that the listed consumer services, retail, etc., including gyms, be on the first floor of a multistory building only, we introduced a problem. The Planning Board has noticed a hearing to correct the inconsistency; such facilities are proposed to be allowed by special permit. Because of the parking demand for such uses, an indoor athletic or exercise facility will most likely require parking waivers anyway. Devra noted that single occupant facilities, like TripAdvisor, are unaffected; such facilities for use by the tenant only are accessory amenities not requiring a separate permit.

The amendment is on the May Town Meeting Warrant. The open space requirement will stay as it is for now.

VII. Update on Industrial District Subcommittee

Devra met with Mark Gluesing regarding the elevation drawings and is waiting for his formal proposal. We cannot get the zoning before Town Meeting before the bridge is closed. We will need to consider our timing of our neighborhood meetings and zoning amendments in light of the closure.

VIII. Update on N² Innovation Corridor

Camoin's work is continuing. Devra noted that the meeting on March 30th was extremely productive in terms of providing a framework for understanding how the Corridor can be marketed. Final report and marketing plan should be on time (June 2016).

IX. NNCC Committee on fostering connections between Israeli companies and N²

Devra explained that Israeli companies account for about 7000 jobs in Massachusetts. The number of entrepreneurial businesses out of Israel is astounding—they have to come to the United States to grow their businesses. Boston is a popular destination. Devra noted that certain Chamber members have strong and continuing connections on which we should be able to draw. This Committee's work will dovetail the efforts of Camoin.

X. Update on Infrastructure Improvements in Needham Crossing

See above.

XI. Other Business

Bob mentioned that the space vacated by the tanning salon on Chapel Street is now under a letter of intent with a women's athletic clothing shop. He has hopes that they can bring this additional retailer to the downtown.

Rick mentioned that we might learn something from CATS Academy, a high school preparatory program moving from Newton to Braintree and marketing itself to foreign students.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 a.m.