



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Economic Development

781-455-7550 x213

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS

WEDNESDAY, May 4, 2016 7:30 AM

Charles River Room PSAB

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

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

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of April 6, 2016.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting Dates

Our next meeting will be on June 1st. Future meetings will be scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month (unless a holiday) in the Charles River Room at PSAB. Because of members frequently unable to attend, the members discussed suggestions about whom we might approach to be members. Moe will address with Marianne Cooley, who will be in charge of appointments after the change in organization. (Devra forwarded suggestions to her after the meeting.) The members agreed to cancel the October 5th meeting due to Devra's planned vacation.

III. Update on Marketing for Needham Crossing

Devra received notice that, although the Babson MCFE program did not accept our application, a group of Babson graduate students will be undertaking the project in the fall. Devra also received a request from a Babson MBA student to assist us over the summer as an intern. There was discussion of possible topics: (1) Research streetscape ideas for the Needham Crossing area; meet with owners and businesses in the area to get their ideas; put together suggested ideas. (2) Research and analyze how to make connections between Needham Crossing and our downtown businesses—see how similarly situated municipalities did that. (3) How do we distinguish and complement the branding of Needham Crossing by the Town and the branding of the N² Innovation Corridor by the Newton Needham Chamber of Commerce. (4) How does downtown Needham capitalize on the fact that we are restaurant destination?—how do we use the restaurant business to increase foot traffic for retail and services? Are there Towns which are similar which have been successful in playing off a strength in their local economy to help types of businesses which are struggling?

Boston Properties has agreed in principle with housing a sign: "Needham Crossing: Gateway to N²". All parties agree that an easement will be necessary and the DRB must approve. Mark Gluesing brought this to the attention of the DRB and advised that members agreed that a sign could be 100 sq. ft. as a matter of right; if we wanted to make it larger, we would have to get a special permit. Mark suggested we design the sign and bring it to the DRB informally even if we don't want to exceed the as of right allowance. Mike suggested a group of us (Mike, Rick and Devra) go out to ascertain the visibility of the sign from the PTC property, look to providing one visible from 128S, and discuss how large the sign should be to be to be easily seen from the highway. It was suggested Steve Tanner would be a good contact regarding the size of the sign. Mike said Tina will help us design it.

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

Devra made the presentation of the zoning to Town Meeting. It was adopted with very little discussion or opposition (questions relating to marijuana dispensaries and adult use). Devra noted that she has a meeting scheduled with a party interested in creating multifamily in the Overlay along the highway, which will require considerable lot consolidation. Members ascertained the current owner of the Staples/Petco property to be Acadia REIT. It appears, contrary to what Devra had been told, that Acadia does do redevelopment, including mixed use projects. Devra will reach out to them.

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

Town Meeting adopted the changes recommended by the CEA.

VII. Update on Industrial District Subcommittee

Devra met with Mark Gluesing regarding the elevation drawings and is waiting for his formal proposal. 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. There is a meeting with Camoin scheduled for May 10th to try to pull together all of the information, recommendations and marketing plan. The final report and marketing plan should be on time (June 2016). There will be a presentation for the Newton City Council and members of the BOS on June 6th.

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

This Chamber work is ongoing; members believe that the efforts of Camoin will be helpful in formulating a plan for these connections.

X. Update on Infrastructure Improvements in Needham Crossing

Add-A-Lane work seems to be proceeding ahead of schedule; Highland corridor work, including the MassWorks portions, are being delayed until next year so that they do not occur at the same time as the Elliot Street/Central Avenue bridge work; we just learned on Monday that the bridge will be subject to periodic lane closures between Monday May 9th to about June 15th; permanent lane closures from about June 15th to bridge closure which is expected to take place around July 15th. Police representatives from Newton, Needham and Wellesley, have decided that during lane closures, the a.m. peak commute (7-9 a.m.) will be one way into Newton and Newton traffic into Needham will be detoured. It is expected that work on the bridge will end at 3:30 so no detours are planned for the p.m. peak periods. Police details will be provided during lane closures; police will monitor the traffic situation throughout the project.

XI. Other Business

Devra noted that Coretelligent, which is doubling its size, is moving from Needham to Westwood; Celldex (which has about 60 employees in Needham) has lost about half its market value; and our mixed use concepts for Needham Crossing, including residential, is **the** trend to grow economically in the suburbs.

XII. Adjourn

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