



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

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

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
WEDNESDAY, September 5, 2018 7:30 AM
Charles River Room
Public Services Administration Building
500 Dedham Avenue

Present: Adam Block, Vice Chair; Adam Meixner; Rick Putprush; Moe Handel; Tina Burgos; Peter Atallah; Bob Hentschel; Glen Cammarano; Bill Day; Stuart Agler; Virginia Fleisher; and Devra Bailin.

Not Present: Matt Talcoff; Anne Marie Dowd; Michael Wilcox; and Ted Owens.

Also Present: Anne Weinstein, District Director for Rep. Denise Garlick

I. Approval of Minutes

Introductions were made, including the welcoming of new member Adam Meixner. The Minutes of August 1, 2018 were unanimously approved.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting Dates

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 3rd in the Charles River Room. Future meetings will be scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month (unless a holiday) in the Charles River Room at PSAB.

III. Discussion of Chair and Vice Chair of CEA

Adam B. was elected to the position of Vice Chair when Jack was elected the Chair. With Jack's death, we need to reorganize. Adam B. indicated his willingness to serve as Chair, so he was nominated and unanimously appointed. No one stepped up to serve as Vice Chair so members were advised to let Adam B. or Devra know that they are willing to volunteer. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair in Chair/Vice Chair meetings with the Select Board and Planning Board. These will probably take place quarterly. Adam B. suggested the Vice Chair will also be able to focus on initiatives.

IV. Update from the Downtown Subcommittee

Adam explained that the reconstituted subcommittee is working to understand the challenges to establishing and growing a business in the Downtown. In light of the current and proposed Town investment in the infrastructure, we need to understand the needs of businesses. Landlord and tenant canvassing is underway. Members received copies of the Minutes of the Subcommittee and are asked to review and comment.

It was noted that many of the same issues which arose in 2012 are being reiterated by tenants and landlords, including clear signage for public parking, snow removal from sidewalks, greater flexibility in food uses (takeout as type of food use in the downtown), excessive parking requirements for certain uses (10 spaces per takeout service station), and permitting issues. It was noted that the snow removal in the downtown is on the Select Board's goals list. Devra noted that Rhain Hoyland has four different plans for same which have not been decided upon; she will ask for copies of the removal proposals. Moe will relay to his board the continuing concern for downtown snow removal.

The Downtown Subcommittee will compile its information from tenants and landlords and present it to the entire CEA membership. From the information received, the CEA will make recommendations to the Select Board.

V. Update on Industrial Zoning

It is Devra's understanding that the Planning Board has agreed to put the corner (Muzi/Channel 5), which was designated Highway Commercial 1 in the proposed zoning, on for the May Town Meeting. Devra also believes that plan has the support of most of the members of the Select Board. Adam B. indicated this will be clarified at the Chair and Vice Chair meetings with both boards.

VI. Update on Chestnut Street Zoning

The Planning Board is reviewing a proposal for creating a new Transit Oriented Development Proposal for the Hartney Greymont parcel on Chestnut Street. It proposes a dense multifamily overlay. The remainder of Chestnut Street is being examined by the Planning Board as well; Devra had prepared a list of requirements which impede use of that overlay.

It was noted that the Select Board is in the process of examining the impacts of the various development which has already occurred and is in process. The 2025 impact will provide insight into the Town's needs. Moe noted that for over thirty years the Town's population was around 30,000; it is now up to 32,500 in just a few years and that's before Modera and Kendrick projects. The need for additional schools is a key component of the proposed study. At present, the Select Board has concerns about increasing multifamily housing because of enrollment concerns. This TODD proposal poses a political issue and it is not known if the Planning Board or the Select Board want CEA input.

Devra noted that the CEA recognized with the 128 Mixed Use Residential Overlay that it doesn't take much to turn a multifamily residential project from positive in terms of revenue to negative. That is why the Overlay was limited to 250 units. It is agreed that any such project must come with a complete fiscal impact analysis with special attention on the current maximum capacity of our schools.

There was discussion of the need to consolidate parcels on Chestnut Street to make mixed use economically feasible, the parking requirements associated with such uses, parking in lieu fees, and the relative cost and feasibility of underground parking.

VII. Discussion of Needham Crossing Branding

There was a brief discussion of where the Select Board stands on the logo for signage for Needham Crossing/N². The Chamber provided a sample logo, which the Select Board did not like. Devra noted that we need to coordinate the look of the Needham Crossing/N² Innovation District signage with that proposed by Wells Office; it is critical to marketing that there be continuity. Devra discussed with Greg Reibman about where Wells was with a plan for the logo/signage. Greg noted that the Well Avenue discussions have been delayed due to reconfiguration of the intersection and discussion of alternative access/egress. We have funding available to reuse the existing signs and put up at least one at an entrance to the park (--the funding is in the hands of the owner association which was funded by Normandy and controlled by Bulfinch Companies). We have the chance to take the lead but we need guidance from the Select Board.

Members discussed how to get brokers and owners to use N² Innovation District and/or Needham Crossing. It was noted that the press release on the \$96.5 million sale of the Shark/Ninja HQ didn't mention either. (It said Needham but mentioned only Founders Park.) Devra noted that, since we don't have funding to market Needham Crossing and since what the owners in Needham Crossing say is important is the N² Innovation District brand, we should use the N² brand with Needham Crossing as the identified location within the District. Rick suggested that Needham Crossing should have its own zip code. Moe indicated that he will bring this issue to the Select Board again once the November override for Police and Fire Station is done.

VIII. Discussion of CEA priorities/future goals

Due to time constraints, this topic was not discussed.

IX. Update on Needham Crossing/N² Innovation District (Streetscape/ river walk grant; consulate outreach)

Due to time constraints, this topic was not discussed. [Devra notes that we are still waiting to hear from MAPC on our streetscape design grant.]

X. Update on Infrastructure Improvements in Needham Crossing

Due to time constraints, this topic was not discussed.

XI. Other Business

Due to time constraints, this topic was not discussed.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:55 a.m.