

TOWN OF STOW
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the April 23, 2015 Economic Development and Industrial Commission Meeting

Members Present: Tom Farnsworth, Andrew Bluestein, Mannie Afonso and Serena Howlett,
Kevin Whalen, Bob Collings

Absent: Richard Eckel

Tom Farnsworth called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm

Review of Meeting Minutes of 3.26.2015

Bob Collings motioned to approve the minutes as drafted.

Mannie Afonso seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

March 31, 2015 Public Forum

Members discussed the March 31, 2015 Public Forum. Members noted that they heard from business owners that they did not feel “connected”. It was also obvious that signage is an issue. It was noted that the Building Commissioner interprets the size of a building sign to be based on window area rather than building frontage. Members noted that mabe it should be proportional to building frontage. A Real Estate Agent noted that she finds it difficult to market Stow because the school district doesn’t market itself.

Survey

Members discussed whether the draft survey should be amended based on discussions at the public forum. It was agreed that the survey should stand as drafted. It was suggested, and Tom Farnsworth agreed to draft an article for the Stow Independent. Members agreed to each contact a list of business owners to follow up and encourage them to complete the survey. It was also agreed that most would be more inclined to complete the survey online rather than a paper copy. It was agreed that it would be best to do an online survey with a paper copy available as well.

Mannie Afonso moved to accept the survey as the final draft.
Kevin Whalen seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

Tom Farnsworth moved to do an online survey with an introduction similar to the cover letter.

Mannie Afonso seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

Upcoming Meeting Agendas

Sarah Cressy of the Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce was unable to attend this evenings meeting. Staff will invite her to attend an upcoming meeting for a 15 minute discussion. It was also suggested to meet with property owners in the future.

Review of Notes from the March 31, 2015 Public Forum

Tom Farnsworth motioned to approve notes from the March 31, 2015 Public Forum as Amended.

Mannie Afonso seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

Priority Work Plan

Members discussed whether to initially focus on promoting new business or to initially concentrate on helping existing business owners. It was noted that the best way to attract business is to make it known that there are 160 businesses in Stow. It was suggested that one way to promote inter-business is by making coupons available for each other. It was also suggested that the Commission should work with businesses in preparing a pamphlet with business owners contact information to be included in the Stow Independent.

Serena Howlett motioned to put together a pamphlet to be included in the Stow Independent. Tom Farnsworth seconded - with the caveat that business owners first be asked if they want to be listed.

It was noted that there could be those that want to be listed on the website but not the pamphlet.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

Priority Work Plan

It was agreed that the Committee should first focus on the survey and next focus on existing businesses.

Tom Farnsworth motioned to first focus on the survey for the 160 existing businesses with Commission Members to follow up with business owners encouraging them to complete the survey and then initiate discussions with property owners.

Kevin Whalen seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

Membership

It was noted that Mannie Afonso and Serena Howlett's terms expire on June 30, 2015. Staff will send a reminder to the Board of Selectmen about reappointments.

Outreach

It was noted that the Commission needs some visibility in the press and that notices should be sent to the Beacon Villager and as well as the Stow Independent.

Members also agreed that that would be good have some visibility at SpringFest on May 16th, where Members can inform the public about the Commission and the survey, and start collecting contact information. Members agreed to staff the table in shifts - the times will be determined at the next meeting. Staff will prepare a sign with the theme - "Guess How Many Businesses There are in Stow".

Tom Farnsworth motioned that the Commission have representation at SpringFest on May 16.
Kevin Whalen seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor. (Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Mannie Afonso, Andrew Bluestein and Kevin Whalen and Bob Collings).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Kelleher