

TOWN OF STOW
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the January 23, 2020 Economic Development and Industrial Commission Meeting

Members Present: Kevin Whalen, Andrew Bluestein, Tom Farnsworth, Bob Collings, Serena Howlett, Jen Gero

Kevin Whalen called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Discussion of Meeting Minutes

Minutes of November 14, 2019

Bob Collings moved to approve the minutes as written.

Tom Farnsworth seconded.

VOTED: (6-0) Unanimously in favor (Kevin Whalen, Andrew Bluestein, Bob Collings, Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett, Jen Gero- Yea).

Public Input

None.

Discussion with John Cramer, 108-118 Great Road

John Cramer discussed his proposal to replace the former Beef N' Ale at 108 Great Road with a new building to provide retail and restaurant space. John Cramer said he used the results of the Planning Board's Visual Preference Survey to guide the architectural design of the building.

John Cramer noted the difficulty of leasing space to a restaurant, as potential lessees have questioned the feasibility of operating in a small town. John Cramer said he is not yet able to aggressively market the space, as permitting is not complete and construction has not yet begun. John Cramer said he is looking to rent to a moderately upscale non-franchise establishment.

John Cramer said the building will not include an elevator, so there is not an opportunity for a two floor office or retail space. John Cramer said he is unsure of the demand for office space in Lower Village, noting a lingering vacancy at 118 Great Road.

Jen Gero asked about the seating capacity for a restaurant. John Cramer said the capacity is for a 65 seat restaurant, though after taking office space into consideration it would likely be around 50 seats.

Kevin Whalen asked about the rent per month for a restaurant. John Cramer said he would work with the restaurant on the buildout of the kitchen, which would impact the monthly cost.

John Cramer discussed the potential for hosting a food truck pop up at 108 Great Road while looking for a permanent restaurant.

John Cramer and the EDIC discussed the volume of tourism in Stow around apple picking season. Andrew Bluestein said Emma's Café sees increased customer traffic during those months, noting that this was not his expectation when the business opened.

Serena Howlett asked what changes could be made to the zoning in Lower Village that would help his business. John Cramer said that signage could be made more flexible for businesses, particularly the size of 'for lease' signs. John Cramer said that wayfinding signage would also increase connectivity between Lower Village and surrounding attractions. John Cramer said that additional lighting in the village would help attract customers during the evening hours. John Cramer added that he would like to include outdoor dining at 108 Great Road, should the bylaw change to allow it.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Oorthuys