

TOWN OF STOW  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the October 28, 2021 Economic Development & Industrial Commission Meeting

Members Present: Thomas Farnsworth, Bob Collings, Serena Howlett, Kevin Whalen, Andrew Bluestein, Jennifer Gero, Mary Bradt-Mintz

Thomas Farnsworth called the meeting to order at 5:30

**Previous Meeting Minutes**

*Kevin Whalen moved to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2021 meeting as written  
Bob Collings seconded.*

**Roll Call Vote:** Thomas Farnsworth -**Yea**; Bob Collings -**Yea**; Serena Howlett -**Yea**;  
Kevin Whalen -**Yea**; Jennifer Gero – **Yea**; Mary Bradt-Mintz – **Abstained**.

**Sign Bylaw Revisions:**

Andrew Bluestein noted he received a mixed reception at the Planning Board Public Hearing regarding the sign bylaw updates. He indicated that most attendees felt that illuminated signs were not appropriate in Stow.

Bob Collings said he is disappointed that the EDIC has not had a better chance to influence the sign bylaw discussion. Bob Collings said there is no indication of respect for the EDIC's opinion. Serena Howlett added that the people that came to the Planning Board Hearing are not representative of the entire town. Bob Collings added that the EDIC represents 6 people and the businesses of the Town, and therefore have more representation than a few abutters. Andrew Bluestein said he feels similar to Bob and therefore spoke with Jim Salvie of the Select Board regarding the matter. Mary Bradt-Mintz said that is odd that the EDIC reports to the Select Board, yet has Planning Board as staff to the Commission.

The Commission discussed whether or not to propose a floor amendment to the sign bylaw revisions based upon their recommendation to the Planning Board. The Commission agreed to take a straw poll to determine whether an amendment would be helpful. Some members believed that if an amendment failed, the outcome for businesses could be even worse. Others believed it would be more palatable to come back in May with a more well thought out revision to the sign bylaw for adoption by Town Meeting.

Jesse Steadman indicated that the Planning Board has asked Planning Staff to look into Sign Bylaw amendments. Serena Howlett indicated that the EDIC lacks competence to review the Town's Bylaw. Serena Howlett said the EDIC could reach out to towns that have used zoning consultants and gather information.

The Commission indicated they would like to reach out to the Select Board and note that their advisement had been ignored by the Planning Board and not acknowledged by the Select Board. Members agreed they would like to improve communication with the Select Board to discuss matters of concern to the EDIC and promote the interests of the Stow business community. Members discussed their suggested amendments to the signage zoning regulations that were rejected by the Planning Board prior to the last

Town Meeting. The Commission agreed to send reach out to the Select Board to schedule a meeting to discuss priorities and to establish better lines of communication following the end of the liaison system.

The Commission discussed the proposed amendments to the sign bylaw and how pre-existing businesses within the Residential District will not be allowed an internally illuminated sign under the changes. The Commission discussed bringing an amendment to the floor of Town Meeting to extend the allowance of internally illuminated signs to establishments within the Residential District.

*Jennifer Gero moved to bring a floor amendment to the Special Town Meeting for Article 6, to allow internally illuminated signage within the Residential District.*

*Bob Collings Seconded.*

**VOTE:** Jennifer Gero – Yea; Kevin Whalen – Nay; Thomas Farnsworth – Nay; Mary Bradt-Mintz – Nay; Andrew Bluestein – Nay; Bob Collings – Abstained.

### **Ongoing Business**

Kevin Whalen noted that a welcome letter should be sent to the owners of Car Lot Express at 92 Great Road.

The Board discussed the potential for EV Charging stations at the 124 Great Road Mobil Station site.

Jennifer Gero left the meeting.

Bob Collings indicated that there is a lot of energy funding available that may be helpful for the Town for Economic Development purposes.

The Commission indicated that an Open Meeting Law presentation would be helpful for the Commission. Jesse Steadman said he would look into the potential.

*Thomas Farnsworth moved to adjourn*

*Kevin Whalen seconded*

Respectfully submitted,  
Jesse Steadman