

TOWN OF STOW
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

Minutes of the July 27, 2017 Economic Development and Industrial Commission Meeting

Members Present: Kevin Whalen, Bob Collings, Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett

Absent: Andrew Bluestein

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

Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2017

Bob Collings moved to approve the minutes as written.

Tom Farnsworth Seconded.

VOTED: (4-0) Unanimously in favor (Kevin Whalen, Bob Collings, Tom Farnsworth, Serena Howlett- Yea).

Members' Updates

None.

Public Input

None.

Planner's Report

Jesse Steadman said that two Lower Village businesses, Papa Gino's and My Style 4 Kids, have gone out of business. Jesse Steadman said that the Papa Gino's spot, with all of the kitchen infrastructure intact and access to water, is a great location for a restaurant.

Kevin Whalen noted that Shaw's is set to occupy the former Hannaford's location in Hudson. The EDIC discussed regional and local competition for grocery stores.

Serena Howlett recommended the consideration of mixed use zoning in Lower Village, to improve the diversity of uses and stability in the district, specifically on the south side of Great Road.

Letters of Interest for Vacant Positions

Jean-Claude Sureau discussed his interest in becoming a member of the EDIC, both as a longtime resident of Stow, and as the owner of Radant, now CPI Technologies. Jean-Claude Sureau asked the EDIC about their work plan priorities.

Kevin Whalen responded that the EDIC is interested in the success of small businesses in town, and welcoming new business to Stow, and that the EDIC has recently been examining the Sign Bylaw. Kevin Whalen said that the commission is made up of residents and business owners in town.

Bob Collings said that the EDIC completed a survey of Stow's businesses to find out more about concerns and opportunities business owners are experiencing in Stow.

Serena Howlett added that the EDIC is still revisiting their work plan, and that the dysfunction of the Lower Village, as the Town's primary business district, is of primary concern.

Jen Gero described her interest in joining the EDIC, noting her affection for the town and her own entrepreneurial endeavors. Jen Gero said that last November, she began the Stow Women's Business Alliance to support women starting their own businesses by meeting monthly, setting goals, and learning from each other's efforts. Jen Gero said that this group has grown to 13 regular members. Jen Gero asked about the goals of the EDIC and the benefit of the commission to the Town.

Kevin Whalen said that the EDIC aims to make operating a business in Stow easier, and to attract new businesses to town. Kevin Whalen said that though the EDIC is figuring out a path to do this work, they have recently focused on a review of the sign bylaw, as a survey of businesses showed that local regulations such as the sign bylaw is a concern for existing businesses.

Jen Gero and the EDIC discussed new businesses in town and recent closures. Kevin Whalen said that in regard to new businesses in Lower Village, the Town can't dictate which businesses come in, but rather general uses and the design of the structures and streetscape.

Stow Job Fair

Kevin Whalen said that this item would need to be rescheduled for a future agenda.

Sign Bylaw Working Session

Kevin Whalen said that this item would need to be rescheduled for a future agenda.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Oorthuys