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Economic Development Committee

Minutes of the Public Meeting of
September 20, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Town Hall, Third Floor, Meeting Room A
542 Liberty Street, Hanson, MA02341

Members Present

- Laura Fitzgerald-Kemmett, Chairperson
- Kevin Cohen, Vice Chairperson
- Chris Ernest, Clerk

Absent

- Ken Sweezey, Member
- Dan Bathalon, Member

Others Present

- Tony DeFrias, Town Planner
- Kimberly Cunningham, Economic Development Committee Administrative Assistant

Call to Order

At 6:52 PM the Hanson Economic Development Committee was called to order by Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett.

Minutes

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett stated: "I would like to announce for those that are in attendance, that this meeting is being recorded for distribution on the Whitman/Hanson Community Access Page. Play back times and other related information on this recording can be found on WHCHA.TV. Our audio is being recorded and will be published."

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION was made by Mr. Ernest to approve July 26, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Cohen. **Voted 3-0-2.**

I. Discussions

1. Hanson Day, September 23, 2023 (Rain Date)

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett shared: Due to the forecast for Hanson Day on September 23, 2023 she made the decision to have it take place inside of the Hanson Middle School.

Mr. Cohen shared: Lolly Jolly food truck will be at Hanson Day. The Rockland Lions will also be attending to add to the food that will be available.

Mr. Ernest shared: He was going to reconfirm with Heidi's Hollow that they will attend Hanson Day.

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett explained: The moon walk would still be utilized that day inside the gym at the school with a generator and the K-9 presentation would still take place. All participated have been notified by email and the Town of Hanson Facebook page has also been updated with the new location for the event.

2. Hanson Economic Development Plan prepared in 2019 by FXM Associates- UPDATE

Mr. DeFrias shared: The Committee requested he look into the past report from 2019 to see if it could be updated with 2023 information. He spoke with the President of FXM and asked if he could receive a proposal for the updated information in about 10 categories that the Committee is looking for differences from the 2019 report. The new proposal from FXM was for \$40,000. This is approximately the same cost as the original extensive report that was created in 2019. He then asked if the Committee would like to proceed with the 2019 report or go back to FXM and express that they cannot proceed with the new proposed report due to the cost?

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett responded; She was having difficulty understanding how that cost would be appropriate due to the idea that it was a request to refresh the 2019 report rather than recreating the entire report. She expected that the new cost would fall in to the \$10,000 range, she found what they were asking to be outrageous.

Mr. DeFrias suggested: To reach out to Old Colony Planning Counsel to see if they could provide something equivalent or suggest someone else that may be able to at a reasonable rate.

The decision was made to have Mr. DeFrias reach out to FXM to see if this proposed rate would be negotiable. Possibly cherry pick the items of true importance such as the Retail and Restaurant gap analysis for the Town. The reason for requesting a current version of the report was to work with the Metro Chamber of Commerce to find out what type of business would be interested in locating in the Town of Hanson. The two items the Economic Development Committee need to know are; what is the housing gap in Town, and what businesses should be targeted to attract to locate to Hanson. Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett suggested that the Committee could speak with Mr. Madden to see if he can be of assistance.

3. Main Street Boardwalk location- UPDATE

Mr. DeFrias shared: He reached out Verdantas who provided a scope and work cost estimate, and that they would-be utilizing the Earmark grant that the Town received. Verdantas figure feasibility that the

concept/design, and cost effective would be \$44,400.00. Where is the best location for the Boardwalk, and where should it go? He spoke with Mr. Clemons from the Conservation Commission, and Mr. Clemons had interest and ideas where it may work out best off Main Street, behind the old Ocean Spray building and into the Burrage area.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: She would very much like to have Doctor Schellenger's view point as well on the potential location of the Boardwalk as our Conservation Agent.

4. Creation of outreach video through Whitman-Hanson Cable Access- UPDATE

Mr. DeFrias shared: Now that we are past the Summer, there's a need to focus on the videos that the Committee wants to create, and he will reach out to Mr. Gullicksen at WHCA to arrange a meeting with him and the Economic Development Committee to discuss the next steps.

5. Investigating the expansion of Flexible Overlay Zone

Mr. DeFrias explained: We have a flexible overlay zones on West Washington Street, and also a Flex Zone from Main Street to High Street. This allows a mix of use between residential and commercial. The Egan project is a clear example of what is allowed in the Flex Zone. If we are looking to increase the businesses in Hanson then it may be a good idea to examine the Flex Zone on Main Street to Route 58 and expand some of the Business Zones that fall along Main Street, Liberty Street and Winter Street to East Washington Street. Any expansion of Business or Overlay Zones must go through the Town Meeting to have a decision made. What is the Economic Development Committee's appetite to expand these Zones to increase the business?

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett stated: She thought that regarding Route 27 and Route 58 that they should push the envelope as far they can. We need to really think about the residential areas. We need to be careful because we hear a lot that people don't want things to change, they like the small-town feel. However, they want more commercial based space so they don't need to pay as much in taxes. We could modestly increase our commercial base by stretching those zones out a bit.

Mr. DeFrias shared: There's a property in Town that has a line that cuts along the land because the lot is transected by a zoning line. Since I have been working here, there has been at least three attempts that have failed to try to create a business in there.

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett confirmed with Mr. DeFrias that the location was between Ed Sheenan's and the VCA Hospital. Mr. DeFrias shares that the zoning line is what's ruining the opportunities to this property to be used in the future.

Mr. Cohen asked: Could you explain to the Board the difference in requirements between a Business Zones and an Industrial Zone? For example, frontage requirements and land area required.

Mr. DeFrias explained: Commercial Industrial Zone requires 44,000 square feet of land area with 200 feet of frontage. A Business Zone requires 44,000 square feet of land area with 150 feet of frontage.

The Committee then takes some time to go over the different types of business and which fall into the categories of Industrial Zone verse Business Zone.

Mr. DeFrias shares with the Committee: We have Business Zones and it may be time to expand them. Branching off with the existing zones and going out a bit further. However, if there isn't an interest in it then I will not continue to pursue it. He briefly talked with the Town Assessor and she is unsure if it would go through. His thoughts towards expanding the zones would help increase revenue for the Town. Over all it's not about creating new Business Zones, only increasing the size of the existing ones.

The Committee goes into discussion of their thoughts and how changes could affect the zones within the Town if it were to expand and slightly grow. They again discuss the property with the incorrect zoning lines and how and what can be done to allow this to be a sellable property.

Ms. Denece Clinton was present at the meeting. Ms. Clinton expressed her concerns regarding the existing Business District line along Liberty Street and that she felt that expansion of the existing Business Zone would be a benefit to the Town. As a real estate agent, she has had many interested parties looking to move to Hanson, but has not been able to accommodate.

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett questioned: This is not something that can just be changed correct? It will require a public hearing where the Public can weigh in?

Mr. DeFrias responded: The Zoning Act is very clear on how Zoning Amendments are proposed including changes in zoning lines. There's a whole process required to make changes. If this is something that would be of interest to move forward it would then require meeting with the Planning Board and Zoning Board to have an open dialog and go from there.

The Committee agrees that this would be worth investigating and to go forward with speaking to the other Boards in the Town.

6. Investigating the expansion of existing Business Zones and/or the creation of new Business Zones in the Town of Hanson.

This discussion was merged into the Discussion Point #5, see minutes from discussion above.

II. Board Business

1. Economic Development Committee Outreach Letter- UPDATE

Mr. DeFrias shares: The letter has been sent to all Businesses in the town. Several letter have back to us do to the Businesses are no longer. We will notify the Town Clerk so that she is aware. At this time, I have not received any emails to the Economic Development Committee email address as of yet. I do check that email daily.

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett stated: At our next meeting I think we should discuss the strategy we want to take going forward.

III. Next Meeting

Next Economic Development Committee meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2023, at 7pm.

MOTION was made by Mr. Ernest to schedule next meeting for October 11, 2023 at 7pm.
Motion seconded by Mr. Cohen. **Voted 3-0-2.**

IV. Adjournment

MOTION was made by Mr. Ernest to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Cohen.
Voted 3-0-2.

The Economic Development Committee Meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Cunningham

Administrative Assistant
Town of Hanson, Massachusetts



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ITEM LIST

September 20, 2023

Item #1 – Meeting Minutes for July 26, 2023

Item #2– List of Business to be involved in Hanson Day on 9-23-23

Item #3 –Hanson Economic Development Plan prepared by FXM in 2019

Item #4 – Verdantas Proposal for Main Street Boardwalk

Item #5 – Business Zone map of the Town of Hanson

Item #6 – EDC Outreach Merge Letter