



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes August 4, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by David Plunkett, Chairman, at the Pike House (temporary Town Hall). Present were Marko Duffy, Brian Linder, Larry Sanford, Patricia Lelos (arrived at 5:45 p.m.), and Bruce Panilaitis (arrived at 6:00 p.m.). Also in attendance was Steve Sadwick, Director of Community Development, and Richard Montuori, Town Manager.

Mike Monahan was not in attendance.

1) **Approval of Meeting Minutes - May 14, 2014 and June 26, 2014**

MOTION: Mr. Duffy made the motion to approve the May 14, 2014 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Sanford and the motion carried 4-0.

MOTION: Mr. Linder made the motion to approve the June 26, 2014 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Sanford and the motion carried 4-0.

2) **Route 38 Open for Business Initiative**

Mr. Montuori explained that this initiative continues to be worked on and was brought forward by Mr. Panilaitis. Mr. Montuori explained that meetings with the banks and the town need to take place with himself, Mr. Sadwick and Mr. Panilaitis. Mr. Montuori would also like to take a tour of Route 38 to determine the areas that should be focused on as a starting point.

Mr. Montuori explained that the senior tax program, which allows seniors to work for the town to receive a discount on their taxes, is about to be launched for this year. The intent is to have one or two seniors compile the names and contact information for all of the businesses along Route 38. With the contact list, the town would reach out to some of the businesses to invite them to a meeting to discuss their experiences in town and to determine if any improvements can be made to help them.

Mr. Montuori noted that he has been given the name of an individual who helps communities develop their downtown areas and improve businesses. The individual has worked with Billerica on Route 3A. Mr. Montuori intends to meet with them to see if they would be interested in conducting a workshop with the businesses along route 38.

Mr. Montuori noted that there are some good things that have been happening along Route 38: there is a business opening up in the plaza behind John Ryan's Pub and John Ryan's Pub will also be undergoing some renovations. Mr. Montuori explained that the town needs to better understand what is going on along Route 38 prior to launching any major initiatives. The hope is to be able to begin bringing businesses in for the next meeting of the EDC.

Mr. Linder suggested business reply cards where the business could return the card with their contact information. Mr. Sadwick explained that one of the things they felt was a benefit of using the seniors is they have face to face contact and the card could be left with prepaid postage. Mr. Montuori noted that they tried to have businesses complete a survey online and of approximately 1,000 businesses, only 20 actually completed the survey.

Mr. Plunkett noted that Sage Bank is also interested in participating in the bank program. Mr. Montuori suggested setting up a meeting with Sage Bank. Mr. Plunkett will work on this.

Mr. Sanford asked if there is anything the town can do to begin working on Route 38 and then bill the State for the work. Mr. Montuori explained that next spring the State will be paving Route 38 from Pike Street to the Lowell line along with some sidewalks. Once this is done, the town will determine what section of Main Street needs the most attention and see if the State will address it. The idea is if it is broken down into sections, and done over periods of time, it will all get done. Mr. Montuori noted that the town cannot afford to do the work on its own.

Mr. Sanford asked if there is anything in the works for the old police station. Mr. Montuori noted that matter needs to be revisited.

Mr. Sanford asked about the status of the town hall rehabilitation project. Mr. Montuori noted that it is expected to start this week.

3) NMCOG Contract for Economic Development

Mr. Sadwick explained that he has spoken with Jay Donovan, Assistant Director at Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG). Mr. Sadwick explained that NMCOG receives Local District Local Technical grants to be used towards to provide technical assistance to towns and Tewksbury submitted for two things:

a. Economic Development Self Assessment Tool

Mr. Sadwick explained that an email has been sent to Professor Barry Bluestone's office to find out when the date will be in the fall for the presentation of the findings.

b. Inventory and Website

Mr. Sadwick explained that the Mr. Donovan would like to come to the next meeting of the EDC to discuss the inventory and website. The town is also currently working on updating its own website and Mr. Donovan is trying to determine a way to bring both websites up to date simultaneously so information can be shared between the two websites.

Mr. Sanford asked what the status of the town's website as far as completion. Mr. Montuori explained that he would have to check with the staff members who are handling this.

Mr. Sadwick explained that the update of the town website will allow the town staff to make web based changes at their desks rather than utilizing a software.

4) Update on development activity

Mr. Montuori explained that Metro Graphic came in to speak with the town approximately one month ago and were looking to move from their Wilmington location to Tewksbury or Lowell. They have decided to locate on Woburn Street and will be leasing the property and moving their office along with its employees. They are looking for a tax increment finance from the town; not so much for the property tax reduction as they are leasing the property, but they would like to get into State programs. Mr. Montuori will be finalizing the proposal over the next week. Ms. Lelos asked if there will be additional hiring. Mr. Montuori explained that he would like to make job growth part of the agreement.

Mr. Montuori explained that another company that has shown interest in coming to Tewksbury is Evoque, which was once a part of Siemens. They are a water purification company and are looking to move their warehouse distribution, manufacturing, and assembly operations over to Clark Road. They will be maintaining their current Lowell office and are seeking 80,000 square feet of space. Mr. Montuori noted that a yogurt company had also recently shown interest in this property. Evoque are currently not seeking any tax incentives are looking for commitments on water availability and waste water. The town staff will be touring the Lowell facility to observe their operation.

Mr. Sadwick noted that two parties have shown interest in 231 Main Street; which is the old Direct Auto Parts site. There are some constraints with the parcel as there are existing rights of way, split zoning (commercial, residential single family and multifamily), etc. Mr. Sadwick suggested the zoning issues be corrected soon at town meeting as this would help better market the site.

Mr. Plunkett inquired about the Wamesit Lanes project that is being proposed at the Motel Caswell site. Mr. Sadwick explained that they plan to come before the Planning Board this Monday night and the intent is for a formal filing the beginning of September. The dimensional setback issues have been resolved and negotiations have taken place with the abutter regarding drainage concerns. To Mr. Sadwick's knowledge, all of the storm water concerns have been addressed. Mr. Montuori explained that financing has been a problem and the property owners are working with Mass Development to help bridge the loan.

Mr. Sadwick explained that he will also be meeting with a party regarding 265 Main Street (across from Walmart) on Wednesday.

Mr. Montuori noted that the owner of 300 Ames Pond continues to discuss residential in that area and may submit an article at town meeting to change the zoning.

Mr. Sadwick explained that he has received some word from Mass Development that they will be doing some financing at 3 Radcliff Road (across from Thermofisher) for Northeast Resource Conservation Center; which is a document preservation/recovery center. 1 Radcliff Road is currently before the Planning Board for the expansion of the parking lot; however, there have been some issues with wetlands.

Mr. Montuori explained that he met with the representatives of Cummings Property to discuss opportunities in Tewksbury; however, there was not much interest in moving from the Woburn area

Mr. Montuori noted that he and Mr. Panilaitis met with the Executive Director of Middlesex 3; which is the group that was formed by 5 of the communities along Route 3. The group is looking to expand to other communities and have asked Lexington, Westford, Tyngsboro, and Tewksbury to join. Mr. Montuori noted that the cost to joining is \$2,000 annually and the details are still being worked out. This would also expose the town to workshops and seminars offered on economic development.

Mr. Montuori noted that he and Mr. Sadwick also met with Dave Tibbetts from the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council to see what they can provide for Tewksbury and there was not much they could do as their funding has been cut dramatically.

Old Business

Mr. Panilaitis apologized for being late. Mr. Montuori requested Mr. Panilaitis explain the Open for Business Initiative. Mr. Panilaitis explained that the basic idea was to put forward a program to stimulate businesses to either start a new business, or renovate their existing business along Route 38. The program would apply to the 38 corridor only. The goal is to find banks to partner with and this process has already started. Mr. Panilaitis noted that his initial thought was \$30,000 to \$50,000 as a target. The town would subsidize the front end of the loan so that the business owner would not have payments early on, or would have reduced payments for the first year. This would allow for them to complete the renovations without seeing a significant loss as a result of having to close for the renovations. The money would be paid back on the back end of

the loan. Mr. Panilaitis noted that the funding would require town meeting approval and details would still need to be worked out. Mr. Panilaitis feels this would be a small amount of money for the town to invest for the long term benefits that would be received.

Mr. Sanford noted that he would be against the town funding any businesses. Mr. Panilaitis explained that the idea is that the program would be self sustaining; however, funds would be needed to get it started.

Mr. Linder asked if there are any types of grants available for this purpose. Mr. Montuori explained that there used to be grants for this purpose; however, they have been cut and funding has been put towards housing. Mr. Montuori will research this further.

New Business

The next meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Sanford made the motion to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Duffy and the motion carried 5-0.

Approved: 9/9/14

No documents submitted for 8/4/14 Agenda