



Minutes
City of Easthampton
Economic Development & Industrial Commission
Video conference call
January 18, 2022 - 4:00 P.M.

Present: Chair Gwynne Morrissey, Josh Rosenblatt, Paul St. Pierre, Tom Brown, Moe Belliveau, Cassie Eckhof,

City Official Present: City Planner Jeff Bagg

Guest: Finance Committee Chair Dan Rist, CitySpace Chair Burns Maxie

Absent:, Mayor Nicole LaChapelle, Chris Korczak

Approval of Prior Minutes:

December 21 minutes approved

Public Speak:

- None

Planning Department update:

- Cottage Street development; the private developer on the project is renovating the building behind Jim's Package on Adams Street so that the store can be relocated there. (Changes are minimal enough that a planning board review is not needed) which will allow the demolition of the package store's current building as well as the gas station next door. It is hoped that the building permit will be pulled and construction begins soon.
- There will be 21 residential units (5 affordable) and 1 or 2 spaces devoted to commercial use.
- Recent Smart Growth Overlay District proposal; the 40R district that covers the Center School and parking lot next door has been expanded to include the Peppin School.
- Through the process, a new proposal for Route 10 from Tasty Top up to Florence Road has been added. The DHCD (Department for Housing and Community Development) has to review the change. Application was submitted on December 31st giving the DHCD a 30 day review period. The next continued hearing on ordinance of the planning board will be January 25th. If word does not come back from the DHCD before the meeting, the application will be continued at the next meeting. EDIC presence at the meeting would be helpful.
- Application for a drive-through Starbucks between Burger King and Tasty Top on Route 10 to be discussed at a planning board meeting tonight at 6:00. Discussion ensued about the benefit of the effort. Josh voiced an initial distaste for another multinational firm, but both Tom and Moe expressed the benefits of the tax dollars to be generated. Paul cited that the issue of traffic generated is unfounded and the character of the corridor wouldn't be negatively affected (CVS, McDonalds, Burger King, etc.)

Discuss Old Town Hall renovation:

- Dan is pushing to send out construction bids in the early fall of 2022 and is soliciting EDIC help in raising awareness and the need for remaining \$6.9 million..
- Performance spaces contribute highly to a city's economy.
- Easthampton is already on the move but needs to maintain the momentum.
- Would like us to consider a letter of support urging continued financial support.
- 350 seat performance space that, with ten events per year, can generate \$100,000 impact on surrounding businesses in the community

- Burns contributed details on what is still needed financially, emphasizing that this is not just an Easthampton project but a Western Massachusetts project.
- \$4.38 million raised thus far
- \$750,000 bond bill sitting on Governor's desk
- \$760,000 needed to qualify for the bond
- Gwynne asked specific areas the committee is targeting. Burns commented that ESB is the main sponsor and also cited the program where chairs can be purchased and with naming rights.
- Tom asked if there has been a grass-roots effort to the general public, emphasizing that it is an untapped resource. Burns urged us all to talk to our neighbors, but also told postcards sent to every household in the city touting a virtual tour online.
- Cassie asked if there are other big donors outside our immediate area that can be tapped. Burns urged us all to think of any that we know of.
- Paul cited how Northampton cross-promotes its various venues and perhaps we could do the same.
- Jeff added that the EDIC has been talking about getting more involved with support for various projects in the city and this could be a perfect example, were we to get involved.
- Gwynne asked if the EDIC could commit to a letter and the consensus was yes, to which Dan added that time is of the essence and that letters to state reps would also help a great deal. Gwynne will write a draft and schedule a second meeting to review.

Discuss 2022 plans:

- Paul's Newsletter was briefly discussed and was met with praise from the group. Tom suggested we not have the word 'newsletter' be part of it as a schedule would be implied. Jeff added that 'more information' links be included.
- Motion was made to accept Paul's input with the two points above, and approved unanimously.

New Business:

- None

Next meeting: February 15, 2022

Adjournment – 5:12 p.m.