

Economic Development Committee

Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

FAIRHAVEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

PLACE OF MEETING: Town Hall for Members and remotely via Zoom for the Public

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 6:30 PM

MEETING TYPE: Economic Development Committee

Quorum and Attendance:

Present: Cathy Melanson, Chair; Jessica Fidalgo and Leon Correy.

Paul Foley, Planning Director, was also present.

Ms. Melanson called the meeting to order and read the open meeting law for the record. On reviewing the attendance, there was not a quorum present.

She noted that Mr. Bernard Roderick has resigned from this committee and wished him well.

Mr. Travis Rapoza has been assigned to the Board of Public Works and as such is resigning from this committee. He gave a short resignation speech thanking the committee for the opportunity to serve.

Review and Approve Minutes of the June 23, 2022 meeting

As there was not a quorum present, approving the minutes of June 23, 2022, has been tabled to a later meeting.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence for this meeting.

Local Business Spotlight:

The business spotlight for this meeting was Fairhaven Pharmacy on 72 Main Street, presented by the owner, Brian Meneses. It is a small independent pharmacy that had a soft opening on September 15, 2022, with plans for a grand opening on October 1st. They offer single/multidose packaging, local deliveries, a 24-hour refill phone line, auto-refills, an on-site blood pressure machine, drug take-back kiosks, as well as scan, copy, fax, and notary services, with additional plans to sell lottery tickets. They are open Monday – Friday 9 AM – 6 PM and Saturday 9 AM – 1 PM.

Additionally, Mr. Meneses owns the building and has renovated it to also rent out space to three other small businesses – 508 Sneaker Store, Peaceful Paws Pet Grooming, and The Bar on Middle. There is parking for the building in front along Main St. or in the back lot on Middle St.

Ms. Melanson praised his hard work at bringing in businesses that will benefit a wide variety of town residents, giving specific note of how pharmacy deliveries will help older residents.

Ms. Fidalgo inquired about switching pharmacies and Mr. Meneses explained a few different ways of doing so – contacting one’s physician or current pharmacy with his business or asking him to make contact on their behalf – if residents would like to switch to Fairhaven Pharmacy. He also hopes to reach out to the various assisted living facilities and has spoken to the Housing Authority. Ms. Melanson suggested also speaking to the Board of Health and the Council on Aging.

Open Meeting Laws:

Town Administrator, Ms. Angie Lopes Ellison, joined the meeting via Zoom for an overview of open meeting laws. Essentially, members of any public board cannot deliberate on issues outside of a meeting – and this includes requesting feedback or opinions via email. One may ask about scheduling meetings or items to be included on the agenda, but not deliberate on matters. She also defined chain deliberation, wherein one member speaks to another on an issue and they then speaks to another member, effectively creating a series of deliberations.

Essentially, she wished to make sure that this committee abides by the Open Meeting Laws and its regulations as much as possible. Mr. Foley also shared several resources on the Open Meeting Laws and the Board and Committees Handbook, including that the Town Clerk is planning a training session on the law in December.

EDC Membership:

Ms. Melanson noted that there is space on the committee for two voting members as well as two non-voting members. Applications to serve on a town board or committee can be found at <https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/volunteer-opportunities> or a letter of interest can be sent via email to Selectboard@Fairhaven-MA.gov or mailed to the Selectmen’s Office at 40 Center Street. Mr. Foley will also be placing an ad in the Neighborhood News about joining the committee.

Mr. Foley gave an overview of the committee and its goals in supporting local businesses in town. He went over the changes since the formation of the committee, comparing a map of business vacancies from 2018 to the current map to note the number of new businesses which have moved in over the past few years, going into detail of the new businesses that have moved in along Route 6, Alden Rd, and Huttleston Ave. He also made notes of businesses that will be opening soon, how the planned 40R district plans will lead to more growth, and his hopes for more business condos. Overall, the vacancy rate in town has gone down a great deal in the past 4 years.

He gave special attention to several new future projects, starting with the Marisol Cafe which will open on Huttleston Ave. What A Find, also on Huttleston Ave, will be adding new landscaping. A Chipotle will

be opening next to McDonald's and a new car wash will be built at 128 Huttleston Ave. The Acushnet Company World Headquarters on Mill Rd will also receive a new entryway and wellness center. Mr. Foley will provide a list of the changes to the committee as he creates one for his own record keeping.

Mr. Foley also noted that the 40R Working Group would begin meeting on September 21, 2022, with 35 volunteers. He showcased a map of the tentative boundaries for three different areas – Route 6, the Route 6/250 Target Area, and the Industrial Area – with the consideration of new areas in the future. There is hope for the future creation of small mixed-used villages of multi-story buildings topped with solar panels.

He outlined the 40R Working Group's schedule, paying particular attention to the Public Workshops on November 4-5 at the Town Hall that would include a Driving Tour, Listening Sessions, and different topics. Public Access will also be invited to film the working group meetings to keep the community informed. He hopes to create better development, obtain transfer development rights, and rework the plazas to better serve the town.

He also showed off several photos from other 40R district plans from around Massachusetts, outlined the differences between 40R and 40B, and made note of a possible shuttle plan to connect Fairhaven to the upcoming New Bedford commuter rail station. A quick overview of the financial incentives of 40R districts was presented, and the basic table of the incentive payments is reproduced here:

Incentive Units	Up to 20	21 to 100	101 to 200	201 to 500	501 or more
Payment	\$10,000	\$75,000	\$200,000	\$350,000	\$600,000

There was also a note about Chapter 40S which helps to encourage developments to create residences suitable for families with school-age children via financial incentives.

EDC Assignments: Lagoa Committee:

At this time, the committee is not appointing anyone to the Lagoa Friendship Committee. The possibility will be brought up again once new members join the committee.

Food Trucks:

Ms. Melanson opened a discussion about the possibility of encouraging Food Trucks to set up in Fairhaven. Union Wharf is a designated port area and as such, it has specific restrictions as to the types of food businesses that can operate there. For example, there can be fishing stalls or the opportunity to buy fresh seafood off the boats, but not traditional restaurants. The committee brought up how the Seaport Inn now hosts food trucks in their parking lot. Mr. Foley brought up his concerns with taxation as it applies to food trucks.

Returning to the discussion of Union Wharf, Mr. Foley noted that work on the feasibility study has been delayed but that he will update the committee on the final results once he has them. He noted a possibility for use of the public launch, perhaps to host a ferry that travels around the harbor.

Next Meeting:

Mr. Foley will be on vacation on the third Thursday of next month – October 20th. Thus, the meeting would have to be moved to October 27th to have Mr. Foley be present. Thus, the meeting is tentatively planned for October 27, 2022.

Before the meeting adjourned, there was additional discussion of several extra items. One was the idea to get better visibility for the EDC via ribbon cuttings at the grand opening of new businesses that invite the Select board and other members of the town.

Mr. Foley also asked Ms. Melanson about the previous Fairhaven Business Association which disbanded during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the idea was presented of reaching out to former members to join the EDC, she pointed out that not all of the members were Fairhaven residents. Instead, Ms. Melanson suggested reaching out to the Fairhaven business community itself for members as well as for ways to make Fairhaven more business-friendly and help local businesses. She cited the previous Planning Board meeting of September 13, 2022, and the compromise reached with the Elevation Retail Marijuana dispensary as an example of the town committing to working with local businesses.

Overall, she wants the EDC to be a committee that the business community can come to for assistance.

The meeting was called to a close by Ms. Melanson at 7:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie A. Fidalgo
Recording Secretary,
Economic Development Committee