

# Economic Development Committee

Town Hall · 40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, October 19, 2023, at 6:30 PM

MEETING TYPE: Economic Development Committee

### Chair's Welcome and Media Notification:

Mr. Carr called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM and read the open meeting law and explained the closed captioning functionality for the record. As Ms. Melanson could not attend this meeting, Mr. Carr acted as chair at her request. It was noted that the meeting lacked a quorum, and thus no actions could be taken.

### Quorum and Attendance:

**Present:** Patrick Carr, Acting Chair; Karyn Ferreira, Stasia Powers

Not present for this meeting: Cathy Melanson, Suzanne Dwyer, John Hinds

Also present for this meeting: Director of Planning & Economic Development, Paul DiGiuseppe, and Recording Secretary, Stephanie Fidalgo

### Review and Approve minutes of the September 28, 2023, meeting:

The approval of the minutes of September 28, 2023, was tabled for the next meeting.

### Correspondence:

There was no correspondence for this meeting.

### EDC Committee Assignments: Broadband Study Committee:

The assignment of an EDC member to the Broadband Study Committee was tabled for the next meeting.

**Discussion on the Business after hours event on Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM In the Auditorium:**

Mr. DiGiuseppe was working with Ms. Melanson on outreach for the event, via postcards, social media, and directly inviting local business owners to attend. The auditorium has been reserved for the event and Fairhaven TV will be present to record part of it. Mr. Carr suggested including a way to RSVP on the postcard.

Ms. Melanson had forwarded information to Mr. Carr that the estimated expense for the postcards already approached the \$1,000 allocated for the event at the previous meeting and inquired if further funding could be approved. Mr. DiGiuseppe promised to work with both Ms. Melanson and Town Accountant Anne Carreiro on other sources of funding along with reaching out to local vendors to provide refreshments.

Ms. Powers asked about the initial response to the event and Mr. DiGiuseppe said it was mainly positive and seen as a good networking opportunity. In addition to local businesses, he was also reaching out to local organizations that support small businesses. Ms. Ferreira reiterated her previous suggestion to encourage attendees to bring cards and flyers to the event.

#### **Update from the Planner:**

As part of his outreach to local businesses and organizations, Mr. DiGiuseppe had been handing out informational flyers on organizations that provide funding to small businesses along with his contact information. This included the Center for Women & Enterprise, the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network, SCORE, Small Business Strong, MGCC, MassDevelopment, and MassHire. A common request from local businesses was finding new sources of financing and Mr. DiGiuseppe hoped this information would be helpful.

One area of focus was the port, the local marinas, and fisheries. The Port Authority is currently working on updating the Harbor Master Plan and has invited Mr. DiGiuseppe along with Conservation Agent Bruce Webb and Harbor Master Tim Cox to review the RFPs for a consultant for that project. He had also spoken to the New Bedford Ocean Cluster and would be assisting them with networking with Fairhaven businesses and organizations.

Mr. Carr asked if there were any recent new developments, and Mr. DiGiuseppe noted plans for a new commercial building on Bridge Street next to the existing gas station. At Mr. Carr's prompting, Mr. DiGiuseppe also mentioned having spoken about a few other residential and commercial projects, but they were still in the initial phases. He also mentioned the plans to rework the zoning bylaw.

Ms. Ferreira asked if there was any way for the EDC to collect fees from local businesses in exchange for promoting them, which Mr. DiGiuseppe did not think was feasible. He then asked for further information on Ms. Ferreira's experience with the One South Coast Chamber – previously known as the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce – and she outlined the grand opening ceremony for the New Bedford Tropical Smoothie Café Location. Ms. Powers noted that the Chamber had not been as focused on Fairhaven and suggested inviting them to the social event in November.

Ms. Ferreira mentioned that the new Wash Ashore car wash had offered free washes on their opening day, and wanted to see more promotion of such events by the Town and a spread of word of mouth or social media by committee members.

The Committee also discussed the differences between Fairhaven and New Bedford, with Mr. Carr and Ms. Ferreira both suggesting maintaining personal outreach, especially around promoting openings. They also talked about the plans to open a new sneaker shop at the old Bijou building and the hopes for the Armory Game shop to expand. Ms. Fidalgo also briefly mentioned New Bedford's storefront rehabilitation program and their Storefront Facelift Social Media posts as a way other municipalities were supporting their existing businesses.

**Any other business reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the posting of this meeting:**

There was no other business for this meeting.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 21, 2023, as the social event will take the place of the November meeting.

**The meeting was called to a close by Mr. Carr at 7:05 PM.**

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

*Approved – November 30, 2023*