

# 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, May 16, 2024, at 6:30 PM

MEETING TYPE: Economic Development Committee

### Chair's Welcome and Media Notification:

Ms. Melanson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

### Quorum and Attendance:

**Present for this meeting:** Cathy Melanson, Chair, Patrick Carr, John Hinds, Nils Isaksen, and Keith Silva.

**Not present for this meeting:** Karyn Ferreira, and Suzanne Dwyer.

**Also present for this meeting:** Recording Secretary, Stephanie Fidalgo

Ms. Melanson noted that Ms. Ferreira was absent due to attending a function at her business.

### Review and Approve minutes of the February 15, 2024 and March 28, 2024 meetings:

Mr. Carr made a motion to approve the minutes of February 15, 2024, and was seconded by Mr. Hinds. The motion passed unanimously. (4-0)

Mr. Carr made a motion to approve the minutes of March 28, 2024, and was seconded by Mr. Hinds. The motion passed unanimously. (4-0)

### EDC Appointments:

**Broadband Study Committee** – No members of the committee volunteered to be appointed to the Broadband Study Committee.

**Lagoa Friendship Pact Committee** - No members of the committee volunteered to be appointed to the Lagoa Friendship Pact Committee.

### Correspondence:

There was no correspondence for this meeting.

### Recent and Upcoming Ribbon Cutting Events

Ms. Melanson discussed the recent ribbon-cutting events members of the EDC had attended. On May 10, 2024, members were present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Nasketucket Bay Vineyard at 237 New Boston Road. Earlier in the day, members also attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the re-opening of Tropical Smoothie Café at its new location at 15 Sarah's Way.

For upcoming ribbon-cutting events, Ms. Melanson would be coordinating with The Ice Cream Cottage at 12 Ferry Street for their seasonal opening, the newly opened Bike Zone at 162 Huttleston Ave, the Yarn Lady at 144 Huttleston Ave, 508 Sneaker Store at 160 Huttleston Ave, and the upcoming Sweet Lizzie's Bake Shop at 48 Main Street. She also noted the upcoming openings of Harbor Freight Tools and Burlington in the main plazas on Route 6.

### **Review of the April 11, 2024, After Hours Business Event:**

Roughly a dozen members of Fairhaven's local business community attended the event on April 11, 2024. There had been a forum discussion during the event where the Committee welcomed suggestions.

The main points were:

- Requests for a business directory
- Increased support for small businesses
- Formation of a business-to-business group to encourage discounts to members
- Discussion of Fairhaven TV's business spotlight program and other similar promotional videos for events in the area, specifically citing the New Bedford Whaling Museum
- Indoor and outdoor public markets
- Research conducted at UMass Dartmouth
- The possibility of a formal fish market on Union Wharf
- The new business application punch list system the Town Clerk worked out

The Committee discussed different methods for promoting these ideas such as mass emails and newspaper articles.

### **Plans for the next After Hours Business Event:**

Ms. Melanson offered either July or August as possible months for the next After Hours Business Event, taking place on the evening that the Committee would normally hold a meeting. The Committee held an informal poll and decided on August 15, 2024, for the next event. Businesses would be contacted about the event via email and postcard and the Committee would also promote any initiatives inspired by the After Hours Events.

A fall event would most likely be in November and would support businesses going into the holiday season. Ms. Melanson voiced her support for the events and their impact.

The Committee briefly discussed having filled out their reappointment forms and seeking members to fill any remaining vacancies. Ms. Fidalgo noted the addition of a volunteer form on the main Fairhaven website. They also covered the status of Mr. Carr as the appointee from the Planning Board and Mr. Silva as the liaison from the Select Board.

### **General Discussion on EDC Survey:**

Ms. Melanson invited Ms. Fidalgo and Mr. Hinds to discuss the results of the EDC Business Survey. The survey received responses from over 500 residents with over 1,300 responses as survey takers could submit up to three responses.

Ms. Fidalgo outlined the content in the Committee's Report on the survey which had collected and categorized every response and then presented the metrics regarding the most popular categories and brands. She also briefly covered the different categories (Grocery, Retail, Restaurants, Entertainment, Recreation, Miscellaneous, and Comments). For the full text of the report, please see:

<https://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/economic-development-committee/news/edc-business-survey-results>

Mr. Hinds wanted to promote the report both online and in the Fairhaven Neighborhood News, with the inclusion of encouragement to contact the EDC for further information. He also wished to email a summary to the local business email list and use the data to target new businesses, both large and small, to invite to them to the Town.

Mr. Hinds then forwarded a draft of a possible business presentation covering the demographics of the Town and surrounding communities. The presentation would also include information regarding available retail spaces and required forms for completing an application. He had previously spoken with Coastal Business Brokers to see if there would be interest in such a presentation and they had reacted positively. Ms. Melanson voiced her support of the concept.

#### **Business Listings:**

Ms. Melanson suggested more regular email newsletters to the local businesses. She also supported the creation of a business listing directory, organized by category. A digital/web version would be created first, then followed by a possible print version. Depending on printing costs, the print version could either be given away or there could be a small fee charged. She considered a Fairhaven Business Guide to be a positive step to take to encourage residents to shop locally.

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

Ms. Fidalgo noted that she and Ms. Alyssa Botelho would be running the Huttleston Marketplace for the 2024 season and that spaces were still available. Ms. Melanson also discussed the annual Homecoming Fair on June 29, 2024.

Mr. Carr wished to extend his congratulations to Ms. Ferreira on her recent relocation and reopening of Tropical Smoothie Café and the effort required. The Committee also discussed the ribbon cutting and grand opening they attended.

Mr. Silva noted that he enjoyed his first meeting as the Select Board liaison and that he supported the creation of a fish market or seaside restaurant on Union Wharf. The Committee all agreed and would like to see the creation of a fisherman co-op/auction similar to New Bedford's.

#### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for June 20, 2024.

**The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Melanson at 7:30 PM.**

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