

# 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, July 18, 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 in Town Hall for this meeting:** John Hinds, Nils Isaksen, and Keith Silva.

**Present on Zoom for this meeting:** Cathy Melanson, Chair, and Patrick Carr.

**Not present for this meeting:** Karyn Ferreira.

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

### Review and Approve minutes of the May 16, 2024 meetings:

**Mr. Hinds made a motion to approve the minutes of May 16, 2024, and was seconded by Mr. Isaksen. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote. (4-0)**

### Correspondence:

There was no correspondence for this meeting.

### Recent and Upcoming Ribbon Cutting Events:

Ms. Melanson noted that while there were no upcoming ribbon cuttings, she discussed the recent ribbon cuttings at the Yarn Lady at 144 Huttleston Ave and The Acai Spot at 121B Sconticut Neck Road.

### Local New and Potential Businesses:

Ms. Melanson noted the future openings for Marisol's and Burlington, along with the recent opening of Harbor Freight Tools.

She then covered a few vacant properties in the plaza area and expressed her hope that the recently opened businesses and the potential 40R zoning district would attract more customers as well as new tenants for the vacant properties. She also outlined the upcoming new commercial building and possible storage unit facility on Bridge Street.

### **Plans for the August 15, 2024 After Hours Business Event:**

In the lead-up to the event, Ms. Fidalgo would send out invitations via both email and postcards. For the event itself, Mr. Hinds would make a presentation on the progress the EDC had made towards working on the suggestions offered at the April 11, 2024, After Hours Business Event. As part of plans to create a new business directory, Ms. Melanson wanted to showcase some older maps and pamphlets and noted how she would like new paper versions to be distributed and how the new website version should be organized.

Ms. Melanson also wanted to move up the start time to 5:30 PM.

Mr. Hinds requested that the next postcard mailing should be the last one and the EDC would only conduct outreach via email going forward. Ms. Fidalgo inquired if there were plans for another speaker, and Ms. Melanson took it under consideration.

### **Networking and Business Presentation:**

Mr. Hinds and Ms. Fidalgo had been working on a presentation regarding local demographics that could be shown to local businesses and commercial real estate agents. Mr. Hinds would seek feedback from a local real estate agent on what types of information would be useful. The information would then be used for outreach based on the EDC's Business Survey.

Ms. Fidalgo covered the data presented which covered statistics on population, income, education, labor force, local school, hospitals, home prices, and homeownership rates. In addition to Fairhaven's demographics, other local communities – New Bedford, Acushnet, Mattapoisett, Marion, and Rochester - were shown for comparison. The last slide had some collective statistics for all the municipalities. Ms. Fidalgo also noted that property cards could be easily generated for any commercial property.

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

Mr. Hinds offered a preview of his presentation for the August 15, 2024 after-hours event, which would recap the suggestions made during the April 11, 2024 event and then note where the EDC was making progress. These included business listings, ribbon cuttings, business spotlight videos, creating checklists for new businesses, and options for buying fresh seafood from Union Wharf. Mr. Hinds detailed some of the previous plans for creating a new municipal building on Union Wharf and how they were currently on hold until work was completed on the sea wall.

Currently, SouthCoast Direct Source Seafood offered opportunities for direct buying of fresh seafood via a website and the related Facebook page and Mr. Hinds wanted to make connections between the operators and the Town. There were concerns about parking and traffic given how traffic had been disrupted during the COVID lockdowns.

Mr. Hinds also wanted to do further outreach to local businesses via regular email newsletters.

In reviewing the presentations and discussions planned for the August 15, 2024, After Hours Business Event, Ms. Melanson and Mr. Hinds agreed that a speaker would not be necessary.

Ms. Melanson praised the work being done by the committee and made plans to meet with both Ms. Fidalgo and Mr. Hinds to discuss the presentation ahead of the After Hours Business Event.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting for regular business is tentatively scheduled for September 19, 2024.

**The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Melanson at 7:10 PM.**

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

- *Approved, September 19, 2024*