

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 17, 2024, at 6:30 PM

MEETING TYPE: Economic Development Committee

Chair's Welcome and Media Notification:

Ms. Melanson called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Quorum and Attendance:

Present in Town Hall: Cathy Melanson, Chair, Patrick Carr, Karyn Ferreira, John Hinds, Nils Isaksen

Staff Present: Community Development Coordinator, Alyssa Botelho, and Recording Secretary, Stephanie Fidalgo

Welcome to new staff liaison – Community Development Coordinator, Alyssa Botelho:

Ms. Melanson welcomed Alyssa to the Committee. Alyssa introduced herself, giving a brief overview of her role and the reorganization of the Tourism Department into the Community Development Department. She expressed her eagerness to support the Committee's efforts in advancing Fairhaven's economic development. Ms. Melanson highlighted the synergy between the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and the Cable Department regarding ribbon cuttings and business spotlights.

Review and Approve minutes of the September 19, 2024 meetings:

Mr. Carr made a motion to approve the minutes of September 19, 2024, and was seconded by Mr. Isaksen. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Ms. Melanson extended well wishes to Ms. Fidalgo, the former Recording Secretary, and commended her contributions to the Committee.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence for this meeting.

Recent and Upcoming Ribbon Cutting Events:

The most recent ribbon cutting event was held at Marisol's Café. The owner expressed appreciation for the Committee's attendance. Upcoming ribbon cuttings were discussed for YogaGuru at [152 Huttleston Ave, Fairhaven, MA] and a Tech and Computer Repair business on Main Street.

Local New and Potential Businesses:

The Committee discussed ensuring that contact information for new businesses is gathered and shared. There was consensus on wanting to guide new businesses through the town's processes. It was noted that the Town Clerk has been assisting with this by issuing business certificates. Alyssa is working on getting business cards, and will distribute to committee members.

Planning for the next After Hours Business Event – November 21, 2024:

While initially scheduled for November 21, the Committee agreed to move it to December 5, 2024, at 5:00 PM. Alyssa has modified the auditorium reservation accordingly. The event will feature a holiday theme, including cookies.

Networking and Business Presentation:

Discussion included the significance of the 40R development as a potential networking topic. The Committee is still working on compiling a business directory. Additionally, the IT department will be moving into the Academy Building, and Alyssa will be there periodically.

John Hinds also discussed the idea of creating commercials through the Cable Department to promote businesses, though Alyssa noted there are legal constraints, and that cannot be pursued. Mr. Hinds proposed that Alyssa utilize her video production background to work as a contractor. Alyssa declined due to conflict of interest, but noted that she may be able to make introductions with the Committee and local video professionals.

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

Ms. Melanson and Mr. Carr discussed potential contacts with grocery chains, including Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, for future development projects. Mr. Carr noted that while it is still in early stages, there are conversations with potential investors regarding these chains. In the event that 40R passes, we may see development here.

Ms. Melanson emphasized the need to help Fairhaven grow responsibly, specifically improving Route 6 and maintaining forward momentum in development efforts. She also expressed excitement about continuing the Committee's work in 2025, including new events and initiatives such as Alyssa's rebranding of the Tourism/Community Development Department as "Discover Fairhaven," (a branding initiative similar to "Explore New Bedford and "Viva Fall River").

Next Meeting:

The next meeting for regular business is tentatively scheduled for January 16, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Melanson at 7:12 PM.

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

Alyssa Botelho
Community Development Coordinator