



Economic Development Committee

Town Hall- 40 Center Street-Fairhaven, MA 02719

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 5:30PM

The Economic Development Committee meeting focused on several key initiatives including a new business-to-business discount program, housing development efforts, and upcoming community events. The committee discussed implementing a business discount card system and explored opportunities for affordable housing through both apartment developments and a potential home show. Updates were shared about recent ribbon cuttings for new businesses in town, including TASCA, Fairhaven Tattoo and Art Gallery, and Sail House Tavern. The committee also reviewed plans for the 214th birthday celebration on February 22nd and discussed a retail gap study that needs updating. Additionally, there was discussion about a ground lease program concept that could be used for residential apartment development, though this remains in the planning stages.

EDC Updates and Networking Plans

The Economic Development Committee meeting covered several updates and announcements. The committee approved the minutes from January 15th, 2026. An upcoming EDC networking event was scheduled for March 19th, 2026, at Traveler's Alehouse, with Alyssa handling the invites. Three new local businesses were discussed: TASCA, Fairhaven Tattoo and Art Gallery, and Sail House Tavern. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies for Fairhaven Tattoo and Art Gallery were rescheduled due to illness, with new dates set for March 6th. The committee also discussed the possibility of hosting a future networking event at Bank 5's Fairhaven location.

Fairhaven's Upcoming Community Events

The 214th birthday celebration is on February 22nd, which will feature vendors, food trucks, and various activities from 1 PM to 5 PM. Also, other events, including the Mass 250 harbor of Courage, the Revolutionary 4th of July parade, the Food Truck Flavor Fest, Swords and Sails, and the Old Time Holiday Village. It emphasized the importance of the Discover Fairhaven website for event information and encouraged everyone to visit it.

B2B Discounts and Housing Initiatives

The meeting focused on two main initiatives: business-to-business discounts and housing development in Fairhaven. John proposed a card-based discount system for local businesses, which

EDC agreed to explore further by investigating card costs and printing options. The group discussed the need to balance business development with housing growth, emphasizing that both are essential for the town's prosperity.

Affordable Housing Board Planning

Discussion about the work that Michelle Costen has established in the effort to have an affordable housing board involving town officials. The conversation also covered a retail gap study from 2017 that needs updating, with FXM charging \$5,000 for the work, which requires formal approval from Keith and Ann Carrera.

Affordable Housing Survey and Show

The Economic Development Committee discussed plans for a housing survey and home show to address affordable housing needs. They proposed sending a survey to residents about their interest in affordable homes, followed by a small meeting to discuss the concept and gauge interest. If successful, they would organize a home show featuring modular home builders, contractors, and banks, providing an opportunity for residents to explore affordable housing options. The committee emphasized that this initiative would be a low-cost way for the town to facilitate housing opportunities for residents.

Ground Lease Strategy for Development

A discussion on a new approach for a town lot project, introducing a ground lease program instead of an outright sale. John plans to meet with Massport in Boston to learn more about their ground lease experience and will rewrite his plan incorporating this concept. It was suggested that an aggressive economic development strategy of directly soliciting businesses to locate in Fairhaven and mentioned ongoing discussions with plaza owners about attracting new tenants.

Next meeting scheduled Thursday, April 16, 2026

Meeting was adjourned