



Economic Development Committee

Town Hall · 40 center Street · Fairhaven, MA 02719

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 5:30PM

1) Chairs Welcome:

- **New Member Introduction:** The Committee officially welcomed Emily Gauger. Emily shared her professional background in community development and urban planning at Mass Development.

2) Quorum/Attendance

- **Members Present:** Cathy Melansen, Karyn Ferreira, John Hinds, Nils Isaksen, Emily Gauger, Miles Grant, Keith Silvia
 - **Status:** Quorum confirmed.

3) Review and Approve Minutes

- **Motion:** To approve meeting minutes from February 19, 2026.
Moved by: Cathy
Seconded: Karyn
Vote: Unanimous (Approved)
- **Motion:** To take the agenda out of order to allow Mr. Trapilo to from item7 to item 4 to present earlier.
Moved by: Cathy
Seconded: Karyn
Vote: Unanimous (Approved)

4) Atlas Track Presentation (Mr. Rick Trapilo)

- **Site Status:** The 41-acre site consists of 16 parcels with varying contamination (PCBs, Asbestos). A centralized file system has been established with the Town Clerk.
- **Demolition Plan:** The building is a public safety hazard. Estimated demolition costs are between \$700,000 and \$850,000. The town is pursuing legal action against Atlas Track for approximately \$1M in back taxes.
- **Development Potential:** Once the building is removed, approximately 10.3 acres could be reclaimed for residential or commercial use.
- **Next Steps:** The Committee is awaiting the final EPA report (delayed due to staff leave) to determine the full extent of remediation required.

5) EDC Networking: Business After Hours

- **Event Details:** Scheduled for Thursday, June 4th, at 5:30 PM at SOCO.
- **Special Guest:** State Representative Mark Sylvia is confirmed to attend.

6) Local New Businesses & Ribbon Cuttings

- Indigo Spa: Owned by Kim Trapper and Brianna (located off Alden Road). A private meeting is set for Monday, after which the formal ribbon-cutting ceremony will be scheduled.
- Commercial Vacancies: The Committee discussed the difficulty of filling empty commercial spaces, noting that some owners are not actively seeking tenants because the buildings are still under active long-term leases.

7) Quick Update: John Hinds

- Town-Owned Lots: John presented a 5-page summary regarding town-owned lots for apartment development. The strategy has shifted from gifting land to a ground lease program (similar to Boston models) to ensure long-term town benefit.
- Retail Gap Analysis: The update to the FXM marketing agency study is currently on hold due to budget constraints.

8) Community Development/Discover Fairhaven & Town Issues

- Discover Fairhaven: Strong support was voiced for maintaining community tourism and event programming despite budget pressures, noting their high impact on resident quality of life.
- Housing Strategy: Discussion on modifying regulations for "non-buildable" scattered lots to allow for small, middle-income housing.
- Rogers School: The property remains in litigation. Only basic maintenance is authorized until legal matters are resolved. Potential future partnership with Catherine Duff was mentioned for senior or veteran housing.

9) Any other business reasonable anticipated 48 hours prior to the posting of this meeting

10) Next Scheduled meeting, May 21, 2026

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting

Moved by: Cathy

Seconded: John

Vote: Unanimous (Approved)