



Town of Barnstable
Growth Management Department
Economic Development Commission



www.town.barnstable.ma.us/economicdevelopmentcommission

BEDC Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2014

Members present: Hank Farnham, Tom Geiler, Jonathan Gilmore, Hartley Johnson, Royden Richardson

Members absent: Eric Steinhilber, Alan Feltham, Francis Wurzburg, Chris Kehoe

Also present: Press: Susan Vaughn, Barnstable Patriot. Councilor Philip N. Wallace. GMD Administrative Assistant, Stacey Peacock.

Chair and Vice Chair unable to attend the meeting. Hank Farnham is acting chair of the meeting.
Hank Farnham called the meeting to order at 3:38 pm

Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2014 (*Exhibit B*) **Motion made by Hank Farnham to approve the minutes of August 26, 2014 Vote: Aye All. Minutes unanimously approved as is.**

New Business:

Discussion: Hyannis Culture impact on business and economic development

Farnham: Culture impact here has been significantly upgraded. The Growth Management Department has made a big investment in the culture of Barnstable. The Town bought Pearl St. and Guyer Barn and then the Artist Shanties.

Hartley: We over culture ourselves and over art ourselves. We spend a lot of grant money and tax payer money. It's never associated with businesses or jobs, it's always spent on things for visitors to enjoy. If we want diversity of employment in town, we need to spend some money on it. We need to downsize spending money on culture, and spend money to create jobs. Divert efforts to outreach. We spend a lot of money on tourism but spend little money on reaching groups, companies and businesses that are going to diversify our employment picture and attract young people out of school. Select some outreaches (tradeshows, printed videos and internet) for our Marketing Plan. We will need to have town council's support and funding required for this.

Richardson: The important word is 'impact'. There are many kinds of impact. Good, bad or questionable. If we could organize a group of (business) people to find out what are the things that impact business here. Take that impact information and focus on the things that are good impacts on business and then minimize the negative 'impacts'. It is important to get feedback from the business community to see what we need to work on.

Geiler: I couldn't support the reduce in funding of the arts and cultural events. That is a huge portion of the market place here. The Shanties and Guyer Barn are just the tip of the culture here. There are about five playhouses in town, the Symphony and even the schools get involved and promote the arts and culture. The money that goes to the cultural activities is mostly grant money – it is specific and can't be transferred anywhere else. Guyer Barn and Artist Shanties promote start up businesses. These are places for people to come and create things, receive encouragement and advice. It all generates money in the long run.

Johnson: Need to direct some of the funding and divert it to something that is job producing. Culture is culture. Where is the money for the businesses? We want visitors here, but we want jobs here year round. Let's get some full time, higher paying jobs. We have no diversity.

Farnham: Look at the town strategic plan. One of the reasons art and culture is so highly rated and focused on is because it brings a higher quality of tourist to the area. The average spending by tourists who spend money on art and culture is higher than those who just come down here to go to the beach. One of the goals of this group (going back to 1983) was trying to attract a more upscale type of industry, by attracting more upscale people here. The problem is, we don't know what the town is doing in this effort.

Richardson: We talk about businesses coming to town to have more good paying jobs. There is not enough affordable housing or wages to support the type of workers they need.

Farnham: The Council is developing their strategic plan this weekend. Councilor Wallace is here today. Economic Development is number 3 or 4 on the strategic plan. It is up to us to lobby for that. I suggest we revisit the Economic Development portion of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town. That is how the arts and culture became so much more important to the town while rewriting the comprehensive plan. BEDC would like to work closely with the council in developing a more concrete strategy for economic incentives to help businesses expand and grow and attract new businesses here. Work with the schools to create more educated work force that would benefit economic development here.

Gilmore: Tourism is such a big part of our community and we are oriented towards that. I understand about attracting new businesses but this is a resort type area so the housing is more expensive and it is different than New Bedford or Fall River.

Farnham: It's difficult for businesses to acquire the real estate they need or want here to create a business here. Housing is difficult. We have tried to create incentives for businesses to provide housing for their employees too.

Johnson: Doesn't it make sense to diversify the work force if 50% of people's wages are not sustainable on the Cape. If there were more opportunities for them to be more sustainable – that is what we should focus on.

Farnham: We all agree tourism is a huge part of the economy and it always will be. Arts and culture makes the dollar more valuable to us. What you want to do, has not been successful over the last 50 years many people have tried.

Wallace: I came here today to find out what I can bring to the Council's economic strategy meeting. We would like to decrease the percentage of that dependency so that is not such a huge portion of our income. We have a shrinking population and an old population. Median age in Barnstable is over 50 years old. So we are not attracting new businesses because the demographic is not there. The average price of a home is coming down. If it continues to decline, this is not good for people. Attracting new types of business – we can do that and it would be extremely good to attract the people back here. People with kids that grew up here all have moved away because they couldn't find jobs here to support the average cost of homes in town. Find businesses and try to get them here. In the long run it will start to create our own intrinsic welfare system because as the young people grow up and move out of town it is costing us more to take care of people. We are a beautiful place, we can attract businesses here. Fall River just attracted a drug kitchen to develop future pharmaceuticals which created 200 jobs. We didn't get it here, but we could have.

Farnham: The small factories where young people make medical devices – have skilled and precise jobs and they do very well. We need to address the housing issue in order to get people to come here.

Wallace: We need to have incentives for people to come here. Everyone complains about zoning, licensing, permitting in our town. Zoning can be problematic for some businesses. These are the things we have to address here. Local government and municipalities can be burdensome to businesses, let's change that.

Richardson: Could this be part of the Council's Strategic plan to get some of the players together and talk about these kind of issues. People want to be involved with the decisions that effect their lives.

Wallace: Getting all the players together more frequently would be beneficial.

Farnham: Also Growth Management is crucial in this. We should be more hands on in knowing what Growth Management is doing and who they are meeting with. Maybe have them at the meetings every month. This committee used to have a subcommittee that would meet with businesses as an Ombudsman.

Richardson: Regional agencies have professionals too. Lesley may bring in different helpful information as well.

Farnham: I wish we could have a little more participatory role with Growth Management.

Richardson: I can't understand why Growth Management and EDC are not hand in hand.

Johnson: One of the issues is the way we report. Our direct duty is to advise the Town Council. The Town Council then goes to the Town Manager and then from the Manager it gets passed down to Growth Management. It maybe a more direct link to Growth Management, to work with them directly, and would be beneficial.

Farnham: We also used to meet with the Town Manager. That kind of communication doesn't happen anymore. Maybe we need more of that communication.

Richardson: Have we invited the Town Manager here? If we would like him to come, we should invite him.

Gilmore: What is the benefit to starting a business here? What incentives or breaks do they get?

Discussion on the overview of the parts of a marketing plan

Farnham: This committee years ago wrote TIF (Tax Increment Financing) and the STA – (Special Tax Assessment) program which created two very different incentives off of real estate tax bill. Main Street is the only place a STA would work. Incentives that are employment related and real estate related. We offer a lot of different incentives but people don't know about them. That's why we need an Ombudsmen. That is why the Town Manager hired Mike Trovato for economic development. Kevin Shea was hired for economic development but Kevin did most work in the affordable housing arena.

Geiler: We should be cataloging the types of incentives that the community does offer. Most towns in Massachusetts have incentives for businesses. To grow, we need to match or better what someone else is offering in another town. There is the ability to increase incentives in order be competitive.

Gilmore: Doesn't it just come down to the bottom line for businesses? How do businesses find out about all these incentives?

Johnson: That is part of our plan. We need to build our product and figure out who is going to deliver our product. Go to politicians and semi-quasi public/private corporations like the councils and MassEcon and Cape Cod Economic Council and ask for grant money in order to diversity business on the Cape. It's like Massachusetts ends at the bridge. We need to change that.

Subcommittee Reports:

Farnham: Subcommittee meetings with the goal to shift towards a more action oriented approach.

- Johnson heads the Marketing subcommittee created to develop a marketing plan, to sell the town.
- Geiler heads the Regulatory subcommittee in order to address Zoning and Regulatory issues.

Wallace: Do you have a date for completion of the Marketing Plan?

Johnson: I would like to give the Council an outline of what we are thinking about.

Farnham: Can you (to Johnson) create a draft to send to the whole committee, so the committee can comment on it for the next meeting?

Johnson responded he could get that out to the committee for review this month.

Regulations and Zoning Subcommittee:

Geiler: Regulatory.

- Automation of the Permitting and Licensing and Application Process
The permitting function is still pencil oriented (health, building, plumbing, wiring, gas). We cannot provide service enhancements with a manual process. Given the technology today, the inspectors should be automated and the information could be downloaded immediately.
- Online Renewal Process - Automation
Would save people a lot of time and energy.
Now it's the same process it was 35 years ago
It would help the town and users (citizens, businesses)
- The I.T. Department is working on a scope of services for what it will take to get this done. It will take a month or two to create the scope of services, and the manager will review the scope and then it might get into the budget.

21st Century Task Force report. Richardson: The minority report has not been addressed in the report. The Commission is going through the Regional Policy Plan (every 5 years). Some of the items mentioned (in the last meeting) are on there. Richardson left the meeting.

Geiler: Zoning:

- A lot of complaints from the business community about Zoning. It is over 400 pages.
- We looked at the area of the Airport Rotary on Rte 28 east to the Yarmouth Line.
That zoning got changed to a medical only district. Need to identify the problems in this area. The solution could be as simple as just changing it back. The medical industry is not interested in developing there.

Subcommittee Directives for next meeting:

- Hartley to email draft of the marketing plan to the committee for feedback before the next meeting
- Geiler get zoning on the table for the next meeting? Get business owners involved and get feedback to hear what they have to say.

Town Council Update:

Wallace: Does not have copy of the agenda for next town council meeting yet. Voted Stephen Cobb on the Airport Commission, he has 15 years of experience with Delta. Also John Wargin has been voted onto the Board of Assessors, he has 40 years of experience as a certified assessor. Town Council also re-upped everyone that wanted to stay on the existing committees. The council approved gifts to the Police Department. They received money from the state for bullet proof vests for the police (as they decay after 5 years). May be a cross street coming up on Long Beach Road, but nothing yet.

Public Comment: None

Motion to adjourn 4:49 pm. **Next BEDC meeting October 28, 2014.**

List of documents / exhibits used by the Committee at the meeting

- Exhibit A: Meeting agenda dated September 23, 2014
- Exhibit B: Minutes dated August 26, 2014

Respectfully submitted,
Stacey Peacock
Administrative Assistant Growth Management

Public files are available for viewing during normal business hours in the Growth Management office located on the 3rd floor of Town Hall, 367 Main Street, Hyannis

*** Further detail may be obtained by viewing the video via Channel 18 on demand at <http://www.town.barnstable.ma.us> ***