

Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes - March 21, 2022 @ 6:30 pm

Committee Chair: Susan DiPesa

The mission of the Economic Development Commission is to enhance the existing business community, attract new business, attract new customers, and encourage redevelopment and new development as may be advisable in order to increase the Town's property tax revenues, income, job base, and overall economic health.

Date: March 21, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Sue DiPesa (chair), Susanne Hofmeister (co-chair), Jack McInnis, Paul Bartkiewicz, Geena Savage, Fran McMillen, Matt Nelson

Members of the public: Seth Pfeiffer (SciTV), Karen Canfield (Select Board), Freya Schlegel (Water Resource), Lynda Ferguson (Advisory Board), Matt Elder (Greenbush), Sara DiPesa (Scituate Harbor Business Association), Stephanie Burke (Advisory of Massachusetts Restaurants United), Kyle Boyd (Town Planner)

Minutes of Last Meeting: All in favor, Meeting Minutes from February, 2022 approved.

Call to Order: Sue DiPesa called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

Agenda:

Old/New Business:

- Call to Order
- Approve the EDC's meeting minutes - February 2022
- Review, approve and sign pending bills - Review approved bills under the Municipal Modernization Act

Chairperson Report: Sue DiPesa

Select Board Liaison: Karen Canfield

Director of Planning Board: Kyle Boyd

Committee reports:

- SHARC - Paul B.
- Widows Walk - Jack M
- Sister City - TBD
- Scituate Visitor Center - Fran

Discussion: Business District Reports:

- North Scituate - Amy/Caitlin
- Scituate Harbor - TBD
- Greenbush - Matt Elder

Discussion: Scituate Chamber of Commerce - Jeff DeLisi

Other Business:

Chairperson Report: Sue DiPesa: Sue gives a short introduction who attends the meeting. After a quick introduction of everybody in attendance the meeting is started.

Committee reports:

- **SHARC - Paul:** Still waiting for authorization by MBTA for using funds for the design of the new building and park at the old Pier 44. They had extensive surveys on public opinion's on suggestions for the new park and waiting to get proposals from design companies.

Karen Canfield: Sewer update: Scituate had another meeting with Cohasset about the regional sewer project. They agreed on a one page letter to be signed by April 1st, by all parties, to agree on an amount of sewer pumped to Cohasset. Cohasset will not sign this letter, so we have to find an alternative to sewer North Scituate Village. Capacity is the problem with our town sewer. A new water treatment plant would help with this, because 30.000 gallons per day is going as sludge from the water treatment plant to our sewer facility. With a new water treatment plant, no sludge would be going to the sewer system. The timeline for the new treatment plant, after approval of funding of 50 Million Dollars at April town meeting, is for the new plant to be online in 2025. Construction would start in summer of 2023 and would be completed in November 2025. To make the public aware, how serious the situation at our aged water treatment plant is, it may be helpful to present a public presentation of a study the town did in 2019. This study shows how dangerous our outdated way of disinfection of our water is and that our fire station is not equipped to help, if something goes wrong. This type of disinfection is not used by any our neighbor towns anymore.

Old Jamies Pub site: The town sent a certified letter to the owner of the old Jamie's Pub property in North Scituate Village to reinstate the construction fence and secure the site. The owner is in the rears, but the town can not seize the property right away. The North Scituate Business Association is looking into this. There are timelines to abate by. The next town meeting is coming up in April and it looks like it will be a two night event.

Discussion support for water treatment plant: Paul made a motion to support article 4 at town meeting, Susi seconds it. All are in favor. The EDC unanimously supported article 4 of the special town meeting.

Seaport economic council grant: 1 Million Dollar grant, to finish the second part of the harbor was granted to Scituate. It will go out to bid in the next month. Design will take a year and then construction will follow.

Widows Walk- Jack: Hibernian got the contract for the Widow's Walk restaurant. It was between Mother Ana's and Hibernian, and Hibernian tries to open as soon as possible.

Discussion Business District Reports:

Advisory Board - Lynda: Advisory meets every week and goes over everything the select board has to vote on and then they advise them. They just voted on every article for Town meeting and it looks like a long meeting. Water treatment plant, marijuana articles, wind mill article, no camping in Scituate article and others. Lynda would advise, somebody from EDC should stand up at Town Meeting and say, that EDC supports article 4.

Harbor - Sara: The opening of the harbor is a big event. The fundraiser for the SHBA is the buoy auction is happening at the opening. We have the band stand series in harbor and the art walk will take place in October. We will have the first Fridays, and the car show. The Scituate Harbor Cultural District is involved in a lot of these event, and they want to light the harbor.

Greenbush - Matt: Very busy weekend, St, Patrick's Day activities were very busy. Oro is having a spring food fest. Shelly from BirchBarn Design and Matt try to do a Greenbush festival in late spring. A lot of construction is going on in Greenbush. The gas station looks done from the outside, the pumps for the gas station are there, but there is lot of work to be done inside.

North Scituate - Amy: North Scituate is doing well. A new meeting of NSBA is tomorrow night. A date will be set for Fall for Scituate at this meeting, there might be more events in spring/

summer, which will be discussed at the meeting, too. The merchants of NSV are putting together baskets for the Course Foundation. Stacy Carey is promoting business in North Scituate on social media, maybe the SVC can contact her to be promoted by her, too.

Kyle Boyd: The rfp for the train canopy project in NSV was posted online and Kyle will send complete bid package to bidders. The town heard back from MBTA, that they will receive a letter authorizing to use MBTA funds for design purposes for SHARC. The town can then post the rfp for the design. Kyle also submitted the application to CPC for funding for the beach nourishment in North Scituate (4 Million Dollar). Kyle is working with Matt and Michelle to update the town's website.

Stephanie Burke: She is a resident of Scituate and owns a restaurant in Cohasset. She is also a member of the Advisory of Massachusetts Restaurants United. She has a lot of connections to Scituate's small business owners and restaurant owners. She is the representative for our area and she talked to state legislators Joan Meschino, Patrick Kearny and senator O'Connor about the ARPA money (<https://www.ncsl.org/research/fiscal-policy/arpa-state-fiscal-recovery-fund-allocations.aspx>) at the state level. She also talked to Karen Canfield about these funds and she tries to get a part of this money to use for the rescue and aid for small business, before it is all used for the water treatment plant. Her arguments are, that restaurants are still suffering and did not bounce back so quickly from the pandemic. The Omicron variant put a dent in the holiday business and besides the restaurants, there are a lot of other small businesses still suffering, like nail salons, hair salons, massage parlors, gyms and so on. And one of the main issues right now is staffing. The reason she approaches EDC is to work on a plan to get part of this money to help small businesses in town. How to reach businesses and figure out who slip through the cracks and did not receive PPP money or MGCC grants or the RRF money. So a work fair or sign-on bonuses might help to get staff. Lynda supports this idea, because she knows first hand, that a lot of businesses suffered greatly and that nail salons could not switch to take-outs like some restaurants did, and customers did not come back and getting double the service to make up for the lost business. Lynda herself is booked out for all the weekends this seasons, but she also sees and uptick in mid weeks booking from business people coming back after the pandemic. And also from people attending little events in town. EDC is definitely supporting this idea, too. The EDC's budget is funded by meal taxes. Most of the restaurants are in the harbor, it might be good to contact Michelle Woods from Mill Wharf's to get an idea, how the situation is there. Making getting a job in a Scituate restaurant appealing, by giving out gift cards to a hair or nail salon or for a gym, could be very helpful for all businesses in Scituate. It would keep the money in town and it would be cross promotion. To get good survey results, we could use the reps for different business organizations here on EDC to reach out to all businesses in Scituate. Stephanie is happy to help putting together a quick survey.

There should be short term goals like staffing, but also long term goals, like getting foot traffic to from late fall to spring to keep all businesses open year round.

Next EDC meeting: May 16th, 2022

Adjournment 7:50 pm Motion to adjourn from Fran second by Jack, all in favor after roll call.

Respectfully submitted: Susanne Hofmeister 05/05/2022

Approved: May 16, 2022