

**Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes – February 1, 2021**

A meeting of the Economic Development Committee was held on February 2, 2021 via remote participation pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order Imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place.

Present from the Committee: Nancy Healy, Chris Charniak, Jessica Valby, Brian Kretchman.

Present - Ex Officio Members: Director of Planning & Economic Development Ann Morgan.

Ms. Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Attendance of those members present was taken by roll call: Nancy Healy - Present; Chris Charniak - Present; Jessica Valby - Present; Brian Kretchman - Present; Ann Morgan - Present.

1. Action Items

- a. Draft Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 4, 2021 as drafted made by Ms. Healy, seconded by Mr. Charniak. Motion passed unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote: Mr. Charniak - Yes; Ms. Healy - Yes; Ms. Valby - yes; Mr. Kretchman - Yes.

2. Old Business

- a. Update: Regional Microenterprise Program - Office of Community Development: Ms. Morgan noted that the program has been announced by Carol Cyr's office. This program offers Microenterprise Grants for towns located in a number of communities including Webster. The deadline for applications are February 8th. The grant program is funded through CDBG funds through the CARES Act. Ms. Cyr had noted to staff that she has received a few applications but, as of last week, none from Webster. Information can be found on the Community Development / Redevelopment Authority webpage at the Town's website.

Ms. Valby expressed concern about the types of programs that are available from various sources as many of them are not really geared towards the newest businesses that were opening right before the pandemic broke out. She's asked Representative McKenna to discuss her concerns with his contacts at the State level to find some way to address the most vulnerable and newest small business owners in the State. She noted that while there are a number of programs out there, many are so sector specific as to exclude many of the newer small business owners. Mr. Charniak noted that there are so many rules that preclude businesses from receiving new funding, double dipping, if they had received funds through other programs earlier in the year citing the Payroll Protection Program specifically. Ms. Healy noted that the PPP program is available to those who received earlier funding and that Mr. Charniak should look into it. Ms. Valby expressed dismay that some businesses are abusing some of these programs for personal gain which makes money less and less available to those who really need it. Ms. Morgan suggested that Ms. Valby let staff know if there's anything we could do to support her efforts to get the State to adjust their program criteria.

- b. Update: Webster Dudley Corridor Study by CMRPC - Mr. Morgan noted that she would forward the study to the Committee. Staff has reviewed the study which focusses on an area stretching along Webster's Main Street along into Dudley and along their West Main Street area. Ms. Morgan noted the study provided some good information, in particular, the zoning analysis in Webster. It was noted that East Main Street, South Main Street and Main Street all have same zoning despite the fact that each has its own unique development considerations and atmosphere based on existing build out.

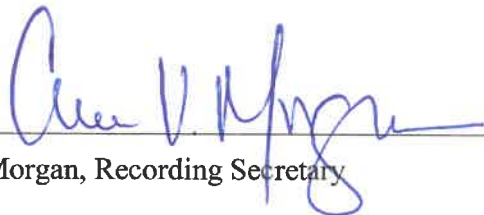
3. New Business

- a. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act -- Ms. Morgan noted that she has an overview of this Federal relief package that was provided as part of a presentation she recently attended. Some of the information might be helpful to local businesses. She will forward that to the Committee.
- b. Town Administrator Updates - None as Mr. Willardson was not present.

4. Next Steps – This Agenda item was passed over.

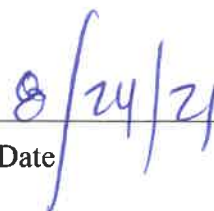
5. Next Meeting – March 1, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via remote participation / Zoom.

6. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Healy, seconded by Mr. Charniak. Motion passed unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote: Mr. Charniak - Yes; Ms. Healy - Yes; Ms. Valby - yes; Mr. Kretchman - Yes. The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.



Ann Morgan, Recording Secretary

Date



Minutes approved at the February 1, 2021 meeting.

EXHIBITS

- None.