

Town Council Economic Development Committee Minutes
May 6, 2013 at 7:00 PM
Town Council Chambers

Present: Chairman Francis Burke
Councilor Thomas J. Lacey
Councilor Jane Hackett
Councilor Brian McDonald
Councilor Patrick O'Connor

Also Present: Michael Gallagher, Director of Administrative Services
James Clarke, Director of Planning and Community
Development

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

Chairman Burke called the Economic Development Committee Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Projection of Commercial Growth and Development

Chairman Burke noted that this issue was resultant from a referral by Councilor Harrington. Questions were posed in writing, prior to the meeting, to Mr. Clarke to serve as a guide to the meeting.

Mr. Clarke requested that the Building Department conduct an analysis of permits issued for the past five years. South Shore Hospital was the biggest driver of new growth for the town. He cited \$80M in growth over the last five years. Mr. Clarke stated that the downturn in the economy is responsible for decreases in new growth. He stated the trend in new growth, which changed drastically (20M in 2012, 29M in 2011, 12M in 2010 and less than 7M last year). What occurs in the future, as related to new building growth largely is dependant upon federal and state level restrictions.

The town of Weymouth is a mature, suburban community with minimal open space and new development potential. He foresees redevelopment of existing developments versus new development. His department is proactively working

with vacant properties in an effort to redevelop, and Mr. Clarke noted the following properties within the town:

- South Shore Fence on Route 18 has been vacant for quite some time
- Massachusetts Electric property has also been vacant for a while, resultant from constraints with wetlands
- RK Plaza is installing a traffic light on the north entrance, which they are paying for-he foresees redevelopment at the plaza once completed
- Finnell Drive has a few vacancies
- Route 3 Industrial Park has a few vacancies, but they are also dealing with wetland issues
- Libbey Industrial Parkway-working on traffic signaling
- Weymouth Industrial Park has several vacant parcels which may be redeveloped
- there are redevelopment opportunities north of Route 3 on Main Street

Mr. Clarke stated that during redevelopment, one must be cognizant of zoning regulations. He cited, as an example, the recent Weymouth Landing overlay district.

Councilor Hackett inquired as to what percentage of the town would be considered built out. Mr. Clarke responded that as we do not have many vacant parcels, in relation to the size of the town, we are pretty much fully built out. Councilor Hackett further inquired as to how Weymouth compares to surrounding communities in terms of development/redevelopment. Mr. Clarke confirmed that Quincy and Braintree have much more commercial development opportunities as they have direct access to the highway.

Councilor O'Connor asked if the town investigates uses which could solicit more viable uses from a tax revenue standpoint. Mr. Clarke confirmed that Mr. Luongo, the principal planner of the town, does precisely that on a regular basis, and reviews town properties for new revenue opportunities.

Chairman Burke cited the slow commercial development at Southfield, and inquired as to the possibility of replacing the current plan with a new vision. Mr. Clarke confirmed that this is not an option as the project is currently underway and acknowledged the Councilor's frustration that commercial development hasn't been initiated. Hopefully the opening of the East/West Parkway this spring will help with capturing commercial development, and he assured the committee that his department is working to ensure that the plans work for the benefit of the town of Weymouth. Mr. Clarke is hopeful that more vitality will be evident in Columbian Square once the parkway is operative.

Councilor Lacey requests that Mr. Clarke and his team attend the Town Council Meeting on May 20th to issue an update on the status of Weymouth Landing. Mr. Clarke agreed but cautioned that negotiations are currently underway and he must be cognizant of this.

Chairman Burke noted that the committee is attempting to get a handle on the needs of the town and searching for potential tax revenue, be it commercial or residential. He thanked Mr. Clarke for his presentation and noted that the committee will meet in the future.

With no further business to attend to, Councilor Lacey motioned to adjourn at 7:33 PM-motion seconded by Councilor Hackett and voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Diane Hachey as Recording Secretary

Approved by

Chairman Francis Burke