



Economic Development Committee

Minutes of the Public Meeting of
October 11, 2023 at 7:00 PM
Town Hall, Third Floor, Meeting Room A
542 Liberty Street, Hanson, MA02341

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Members Present

- Laura Fitzgerald-Kemmett, Chairperson
- Kevin Cohen, Vice Chairperson via Zoom
- Chris Ernest, Clerk via Zoom

Absent

- Ken Sweezey, Member
- Dan Bathalon, Member

Others Present

- Tony DeFrias, Town Planner
- Kimberly Cunningham EDC Administrative Assistant

Call to Order

At 7:13 PM the Hanson Economic Development Committee was called to order by Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett.

Minutes

Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett stated: "I would like to announce for those that are in attendance, that this meeting is being recorded for distribution on the Whitman/Hanson Community Access Page. Play back times and other related information on this recording can be found on WHCHA.TV. Our audio is being recorded and will be published."

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION was made by Mr. Cohen to approve September 20, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Ernest. **Voted 3-0-2**

I. Discussions

1. Discuss Hanson Day Results, September 23, 2023 (Rain Date)

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett shared: We had to pivot due to the rain and had to have it inside however, there was positive feedback from everyone including both the non-profits and business that attended. Next year I would like to see the number of businesses that attend increase. That would be my goal for next year.

Mr. Cohen added: Received great feedback on the event. The Lion's did well and Lolly Jolly did great as well. He asked to keep in touch for future events.

Mr. Ernest stated: I think it was really successful and I heard a lot of positive feedback too. People seemed to like having the cable access network there.

The discussion portion of the meeting then opened up to a casual conversation with Mark Kruger, Owner and Eric Visser, Sales of "tech hifi" located at 1 Liberty Street. They came to the meeting to offer some thoughts and ideas with the Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Kruger shared: He has had his business in Hanson for 13 years. Currently he has two businesses next to one another, "tech hifi" and "Strawberry Records". Many people are not aware of who they are and what they have to offer the community. It would be great to have a "Shop Hanson" type of situation, such as a web site or page that would indicate all the small businesses that Hanson has to offer. Possibly have a time when all the businesses extend their hours on a certain day or offer as special that is specific to "Shop Hanson".

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett explained: Years ago, the Hanson Business Network offered a scavenger hunt where you went to each business that participated and received a stamp, and at the end of the event everyone gathered at Meadowbrook and the prizes were then distributed to the winners. Something like that would be great again, it just didn't get the visibility it needed back then. We have also participated in the "Shop Small" campaign with American Express. In the past we were invited by the Pembroke Chamber of Commerce to join forces with them. If our job is to promote Economic Development, we have to help the small businesses which was always the mantra for the Hanson Business Network. The Economic Development Committee is very similar but bit more detailed in the sense that we are working towards tourism and potential grants for the Town.

Mr. Visser shared: The amount of times we refer people to other local businesses is actually staggering. We try to keep it in Hanson when we can, but be it local as a whole. We tend to get people from all over New England because there aren't many companies that do what we do and we always offer other local services when they are here (such as coffee and restaurants).

The Committee and "tech hifi" continue to discuss the Town's businesses from the past and what could be done in the future.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: It may be time to look into the legality with in the Town as to what we can offer our local businesses.

Mr. DeFrias shared: Technically Hanson as a Town can't promote businesses because it shows favoritism. I can look into what can and cannot be done by the Economic Development Committee.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett shared: The conclusion I am reaching is that we should revitalize the Hanson Business Network which would partner with the Economic Development Committee. There are private things that the Network can do that the Town can't. The Network can collect the data and businesses together and share on their website. I would like to see if someone else can spearhead the Business Network since I have a lot on my plate.

Mr. Ernest shared: I got involved with the Economic Development Committee because of small businesses like Mark's. The question I have is "What can we do as a Town Committee?" I want to be part of promoting new businesses but we also need to support what is already here.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: We are going to need to get some clarity from Town Counsel on what we are able to do and when we are crossing the line as a Town supporting small businesses.

Mr. Cohen shared: We are going to have a domino effect with Main Street after this new building is completed, I am sure it will be rented out quickly. We need to be able let businesses know when new space is available.

2. Discuss Economic Development Committee Outreach to Local Businesses through Phone or Personal Contact

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett expressed: We have sent the letter out to the businesses, we have our business cards; how do we want to now execute this?

Mr. DeFrias recommends that the Committee split up to reach more businesses. Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett agrees with him and then suggest to have the Select Board involved too. Mr. Ernest shares that he is eager to get going and offers in person or over the phone contact with the local businesses

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: She knows there's a need to focus on the small businesses however, she feels the Town has not had a good dialog with the larger businesses in Town.

Mr. DeFrias shared: The Economic Development Committee could have a business summit at the Town Hall.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett asked the Committee their opinion in regards to having a business summit and to gather information from businesses first and if that doesn't work then go out to the businesses individually.

Mr. Ernest shared: He thought the possibility of having three or four sessions on the calendar that would be open forums for businesses to attend could be a great opportunity.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett asked: What is our vision for this session, what do we want to share? Introduce the Committee, show them what we have been working towards, hopefully we will work with the Hanson Business Network, and working on the Main Street clean up with the goal to have it as a destination.

Mr. Ernest shared: I think it is important to find out why people are in business in Hanson. We certainly want to know what we can do better and how we can assist. I love to hear from people what's great about having their business in Hanson and what is working really well so we can get the word out.

Mr. DeFrias stated: I think you may have just come up with the 30 second blurb and video that can be posted on WHCA, social media and web page. Here's the Economic Development Committee Hanson, here are some of our plans, what we would like to do, who we would like to hear from, and this is what we are going to do as outreach. Then get that outreach going.

The Committee then discussed the idea of reaching out to other local Economic Development Committees and Chamber of Commerce to help with ideas and guidance.

Mr. DeFrias suggested: An outline should be created to organize what needs to be tackled. He then offered to start creating an outline based on what had just been discussed. He would then email it to the Committee members and open it to suggestions for more ideas to add and begin the Committee's roadmap.

II. Board Business

1. Proposal cost for Hanson Economic Development Plan prepared in 2019 by FXM Associates

Mr. DeFrias shared: He received an email from Mr. Mahady stating that they would be willing to speak with Committee and reconsider how we may go about in regards creating an update with reduced effect including being more selective on what addition research would be needed and to update critical findings. Mr. Mahady suggested for Committee to come up with a price point that would work within their budget for the new update of crucial findings. At this time, Mr. DeFrias has also passed the report to OCPC to look it over too.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: Please set up a meeting with FXM for next month and before then have OCPC look at the plan.

2. Main Street Boardwalk Location

Mr. DeFrias shared: Yesterday he had met with Frank Schellenger, Phil Clemons and Dave Mansfield regarding the location of the Boardwalk. He shared the proposal that was prepared by Verdantas regarding design work. Phil and Dave felt that the money could be better spent by utilizing the money in the earmark for actually constructing a Boardwalk in an area down off of Crooker Place instead of giving it to Verdantas. There area has a type of boardwalk now that needs to be replaced and it would be part of the Bay Circuit Trail, it is near private property but understand that the Town is attempting or desires to purchase a portion of Hubble along with the State. That may take some time to happen so in the mean time they suggest utilizing the Bay Circuit Alliance they could pursue to put the Boardwalk there and get an easement. They are suggesting it to be 30 feet in length and 4 feet wide.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett expressed: This is a lot of red flags for me. First, if that property isn't lockdown then I am not comfortable with that. Second of all, that is not anywhere near where we discussed having this Boardwalk. The whole idea was to be able to get off the train and connect to

Burrage. I appreciate that they may want to do something with this particular project, for me personally this way too far from where we were going to have it. In order to get to this area, you need to go down Crooker Place, it's not a highly traveled location and is not easily accessible. I appreciate their thoughts but we wanted something on Main Street extremely visible that people could connect to Burrage.

Mr. DeFrias shared: It may be more difficult to find a location that works on Main Street.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett suggests: What about over by the old fire station?

Mr. DeFrias responded: It's a matter of cost in making it work, and they figured in their mind to make something work then that location may be a better spot. We can go back to the drawing board.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: If that building at the beginning of Crooker Place was taken care of then I might agree with that because we could do signage and a parking lot.

Mr. DeFrias shared: He will look more into the Verdantas proposal and will update the Committee at the next meeting.

3. Meeting Schedule with Whitman-Hanson Cable Access

Mr. DeFrias shared: He spoke with Rob Gulliksen from WHCA and Rob's available schedule to meet with the Economic Development Committee would be Monday thru Thursday 10am to 5pm. He will reach out to Mr. Gulliksen to ask for a list of dates he would be able to meet via ZOOM. The Committee all agreed.

4. One Stop Grant Program, The Master Plan and MBTA Zoning

Mr. DeFrias shared: There will be news coming up in regards to the 2024 **One Stop Grant Program**. Under the current FY 2023 for pedestrian improvements for Main Street, Verdantas performed a drone survey along the corner of High Street to Elm Street back in June and have sent some preliminary design plans. In August, OCPC meet with the Planning Board about the process for **The Master Plan**. The Planning Board has created a Steering Committee that will include members from the Planning Board, Conservation Department and the local public. I have met with Reanna Duggan from OCPC and they have created a community profile that is about 108 pages. Reanna is going to create some outreach to the public. Lastly, the **MBTA Zoning** has been kicked off through the Planning Board. We have a second grant from the Mass Housing Partnership for just under \$20,000.00. The company VHB has been assigned to Hanson to help us get over the finish line. I will be meeting with them October 20th. A basic preliminary draft of the By-Laws for that area has been created based on a template provided by the State. I have also applied for a grant under the Complete Streets for the intersection of Liberty Street and Winter Street. It is a half a million dollar grant that has been submitted.

III. Next Meeting

Next Economic Development Committee meetings are scheduled for November 8, 2023, at 7pm and December 6, 2023.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett asked that a "save the date" email be sent to the Committee so that they are aware of the meeting dates in advance.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION was made by Mr. Cohen to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Ernest.
Voted 3-0-2.

The Economic Development Committee Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Cunningham

Administrative Assistant
Town of Hanson, Massachusetts



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ITEM LIST

October 11, 2023

Item #1 – Meeting Minutes for September 20, 2023

