

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES (July 1, 2010)

Prepared By Associate Member Dick Calandrella

LOCATION --- Acton, Massachusetts Town Hall (Room 204)

ATTENDEES --- Member Joe Ianello (Acting Chairman) / Member Leigh Davis-Honn / Member Chris Pappas / Member Nancy Dinkel / Associate Member Dick Calandrella / Guest Roland Bartl

BEGIN --- 7:11 p.m.

OPEN MIKE --- no one

MINUTES --- no minutes available for review/approval

EDC MEMBERSHIP LIST --- Joe asked everyone to check their data for accuracy.

PHASE I – CITATION REVIEW PANEL --- Dick was asked to explain the process.

He said that a Letter signed by the Town Manager Steve Ledoux and EDC Chairman Doug Tindal had been sent to “all” businesses in Acton (900+) to inform them that a sign review process was underway

Dick said a Letter had been sent to businesses (24 on the list) which had received earlier notification letters from Scott that their sign display was in violation and they were invited to schedule a meeting with the Sign Review Panel to discuss their situation.

He said a Press Release had been issued to notify the public-at-large that a sign review process was underway

Dick reported that 2 Sign Review Panel (SRP) meetings were held --- with Acton House of Pizza (Owner Danny Pantazelos and Attorney Steven Murra) on Monday, June 28, 2010 and with Ink Etcetera (Owner Joe Rotundo) at Acton Town Hall. EDC Members attending were: Nancy Dinkel, Dick Calandrella, Ann Chang, David Didriksen. Town Counsel Nina Pic kering-Cook. Acton Zoning Enforcement Officer Scott Mutch.

Both meetings were cordial, business owners were amenable in coming into compliance, sign violations were discussed, remedies were recommended, and follow-up letters were sent.

It was agreed that next steps would involve inviting the remaining non-compliance businesses to meet with the Sign Review Panel by personal telephone calls from Ann Chang and Dick Calandrella. Scott was asked to provide that list.

It was also agreed that Scott should now continue the sign review process by visiting "all" other businesses in Acton to help alleviate the impression that certain parts of the community were exempt.

It was strongly suggested by the entire Sign Review Panel that Scott meet personally with the owner/staff at each business to explain why he was there and then take photos. Roland informed us that in a meeting on June 30th this was discussed and rejected . Instead, a letter would be sent notifying the businesses that Scott would be visiting them to review their sign displays.

It was also discussed that more public relations be carried out --- through the Town Web site, through other Boards and Committees. Leigh suggested photos be posted on the Town Web site to show the types of good and bad sign displays. Roland said no resources were available

PHASE II --- The Acton Historic District Commission (HDC) Web site was noted as an example of how to display educational materials online. Roland noted that the Town simply does not have time to do education. It was suggested that the individual Boards and Committees could fill that role. Joe asked how can we keep the education, enforcement and bylaw review process going. Leigh commented that Belle Choate had done some sign education documents in the past. Kristin was asked to check this.

PHASE III --- ongoing

DEMOGRAPHICS --- It was agreed that Leigh and Dick would pursue getting the DBA list and entire business list from the Assessor's office, and use this to compile as-complete-as-possible list of Acton businesses.

MARKETING --- Leigh discussed the 40-question survey document , and talking to Mark Hald about putting the Introduction Letter on the Town Web site, and/or sending it via E-Mail or Postal Mail to all Acton businesses.

It was agreed that Leigh and Dick would meet to plan some marketing and public relations activities to support this.

There was discussion about Public Relations training for the Town staff about how to deal with businesses more effectively.

Leigh mentioned an Events Calendar and how to get events posted on the Town Web site in an easy-to-find location.

NEW & EXISTING BUSINESS SUPPORT TEAM --- Leigh is also working with the Chamber of Commerce to get a list of all retail businesses in Acton.

PATH FORWARD --- not discussed

ADJOURN --- 8:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING --- Thursday, July 15, 2010

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