

**Town of Epsom
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Old Meetinghouse Lower Level
November 21, 2023 5:00 PM**

Present

Vincent Pagano, Chair

Joe Wysocki

Meadow Wysocki, Select Board

Kathy DesRoches, Planning Board

Jason Johnson

Susan Lombard

Sinehan Kerman, Secretary

Absent

Linda Hodgdon, Vice Chair

Call to Order

Mr. Pagano called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Mr. Johnson motioned to approve October 20th Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Wysocki seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Agenda Review

No changes to proposed agenda.

Discussion

Proposed Budget

Mr. Pagano shared updates regarding the proposed Economic Development Committee (EDC) budget, to include monies for Economic Revitalization Zone signs, training and conferences, dues, postage, and printing. The proposed new budget has a request for increase of approximately \$300 and is awaiting approval by the Budget Committee.

Survey Questions Review

The EDC reviewed initial questions drafted by Mr. Pagano. Mr. Johnson asked to focus on the goal of the survey with our questions, and try not to ask questions that are too broad in scope. Mr. Wysocki suggested asking about the state of businesses in Epsom to better understand the needs of local business owners at a high level by asking about the process of bringing business to town, and what type of support is needed to continue operating. Ms. Lombard asked if the Planning Board would be able to provide historical information about businesses that chose not to locate in Epsom after initial inquiry. The group discussed doing a secondary survey after learning more from the initial survey to understand business support needs.

The EDC workshopped potential survey questions and agreed to continue working on the survey shared document.

Water District Expansion Public Information Session Review

Mr. Pagano began discussion by sharing that establishing a new Water District is potentially a multi-decade effort. Mr. Johnson share that he talked to the town attorney about possibility of the town supporting a private well for a business like a grocery store, that would be paid back over time. Ms. Wysocki mentioned that it is important to note where the funds would originate from. Mr. Wysocki mentioned that while there may be an opportunity to create some sort of agreement with an interested grocery store, there are legal and regulatory implications that must be considered for such a long term project. Ms. Wysocki mentioned some additional limitations around which grocery chains may or may not be options to bring business to town based on how they choose store locations.

Mr. Wysocki continued discussion about expansion challenges based on the documentation accessible to the group about the existing Water District. He suggested starting with an education campaign to help share information about the value of a potential water district expansion and the timeline for such a project. Ms. Pagano reminded the group that the Water District related warrant article is the only warrant article item that did not pass in the last town vote. Ms. Wysocki shared that the recent grant application related to the Water District Expansion was specifically to determine the viability and sources for a third well. Mr. Pagano suggested learning more about how Boscowan added a new Market Basket, as they did so within a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district. Mr. Wysocki asked for assistance from the EDC to decide how best to communicate the value of Water District Expansion research to the town. Ms. Wysocki offered to invite a representative from the Water District to the next EDC meeting.

Other Business:

Mr. Johnson suggested assigning written action items to close meetings to help ensure continuity between monthly sessions. The EDC agreed to continue workshopping the Epsom business survey prior to the next EDC meeting. Mr. Johnson shared that he is working on videos that can be shared on the upcoming EDC YouTube channel.

Public Input

None

Mr. Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wysocki seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted, Sinehan Kerman.