

Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2021

Members Present: Councilor Melanie Hamblen, Chair; Councilors Glenn Jones and Cobi Frongillo
Members Absent: Councilor Bissanti
Town Staff Present: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Alecia Alleyne, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Lily Rivera, Marketing and Communications Specialist; Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development

Committee Chair Melanie Hamblen called the meeting to order at 5:46 PM

1. Wayfinding Signs discussion

Town Administrator Jamie Hellen (TA Hellen) gave a brief summary and update: In a Market Report two years ago there was a recommendation for wayfinding signs which was supported with enthusiasm. But, there are complications which include emotions over design and what goes on them, where they point visitors to and the overall cost to installing them. They often require easements, coordination with state agencies and regional stakeholders and signs off interstate exits need to be approved by MassDOT. An internal staff committee was formed and had one meeting in May 2021, but due to staff changes soon after there have been no further meetings. The project will resume now that we have hired Lily Rivera.

Councilor Frongillo spoke on the importance of community branding and cohesion across all things we do as a town (i.e. publications, website, signage). He provided a list of MA towns that use wayfinding and gave a presentation on North Adams as an example of well-executed wayfinding in their use of consistent town imagery with vibrant, uniform colors across all signage and media. Councilor Frongillo's presentation is attached with links to his research.

Councilor Jones spoke on the need to collectively establish what it is that we put in our branding that would be a clear representation of Franklin, and which elements of the branding could be an automatic association with Franklin. He suggested we align wayfinding with existing Cultural District signage in town which may help any political conflicts regarding what gets on these signs. TA Hellen stated that the Cultural District signs are required by the state to be installed with their design for all cultural districts in MA, and he would resist duplicating it.

TA Hellen discussed that this will be an extensive process which will be costly. We will have the committee do some marketing and branding research and come back to the Council to present. We will eventually need to go out to bid.

Ms. Rivera spoke on the importance of establishing an identity first, and then consistent branding/wayfinding.

There was a presentation of the wayfinding in Lincoln (see attached presentation) and discussion around how its design and use of wood and green colors accurately represent a rural town with protected open space. Discussion followed regarding our need to utilize a similar branding strategy to accurately represent Franklin. TA Hellen stated that with the census coming out soon, this could be an ideal opportunity to look at who we will be in ten years, and start to create an identity based on that information.

Further discussion included whether the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) might be a potential funding source. TA Hellen stated that the CPC would not be able to fund anything for at least seventeen months. Councilor Jones opined that it could take at least that long to get through the planning phase. TA Hellen agreed with Councilor Jones on the timeline but added that if we want to hire a 3rd party to facilitate, we will want them involved from the beginning of the planning.

Mr. Taberner discussed how a lot of money and time went into the Cultural District signs and other issues. To blend things together will be a big, long-term project. Maybe we do it in phases, one section per year.

Resident Steve Sherlock asked if the wayfinding examples could be shared publicly. He also suggested that we might want to focus on who we want to be in 2028 as part of our branding. (2028 is Franklin's 250th birthday.)

TA Hellen stated that at the Harvest Festival on Oct 2nd @ Harvest Fest the MAPC, with town staff, will have a booth to unveil the origins of the downtown zoning analytics & diagnostics study. They will have set dates on when the public discussions will happen for people to chime in on these issues as well as the wayfinding, which is related.

It was determined that this committee will meet again on October 20th, with initial research findings from Ms. Rivera.

Councilor Jones made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Hamblen seconded. Motion to adjourn approved unanimously, 3-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:23 PM.

A list of Massachusetts communities that have recently completed branding/wayfinding efforts.

- [Foxboro](#)
- [Chelmsford](#)
- [North Adams](#)
- [Salem](#)
- [Fall River](#)
- [Wellesley](#)
- [Bridgewater](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Scituate](#)
- [Woburn](#)
- [Lincoln](#)
- Clinton
- Greenfield
- Tisbury
- Winthrop
- Orleans
- Ware
- Cambridge

