

Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2022

EDC Members:	Councilor Melanie Hamblen, Chair; Councilor Cobi Frongillo, Vice Chair; Councilors Glenn Jones & Patrick Sheridan
Other Members of the Steering Committee:	Bruce Hunchard, Zoning Board Chair (via Zoom); Greg Rondeau, Planning Board Chair; Beth Wierling, Planning Board Clerk
Town Staff:	Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Alecia Alleyne, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Bryan Taberner, Director - Planning and Community Development

Chair Hamblen called the meeting to order at 5:54 p.m. and read announcements. Chair Hamblen stated that this is an EDC Plus Steering Committee meeting.

1. EDC + Steering Committee: Discussion from MAPC about the “Franklin For All” zoning reform project for Franklin Center, including the Downtown Commercial District and surrounding neighborhoods.

Update on March 7th Franklin For All Public Forum

Mr. Taberner stated that Emma from MAPC is not at this meeting and would not be attending all EDC meetings. Mr. Taberner discussed the upcoming March 7th public forum, providing information about how people can attend (live or via Zoom) or access the recording, how many people are expected to be in attendance, who will be presenting, how the forum is expected to run, and the survey which will be introduced at the forum. He also discussed the focus groups that have been held and different ways that people can make their ideas and opinions known.

- Question / discussion regarding the rezoning planning process - Town Administrator Jamie Hellen (TA Hellen) discussed that once the study is done the MAPC will deliver a report with recommendations; the Steering Committee will review them and modify if necessary, and then make recommendations for consideration to the Planning Board and Town Council.
- Discussion regarding development of downtown center - Mr. Hunchard discussed his thoughts regarding the development/beautification of downtown; how a state highway (Route 140) running through has an impact, steps that a developer would need to take in acquiring and developing land, how the ZBA would be involved in regard to restrictions, how several of the buildings downtown were built pre-zoning and will likely need to be torn down or renovated extensively, how set-backs may need to be reduced so that it's not so restrictive, the relevance of building heights and number of floors a building has, and other related points.
- Question / discussion regarding the district that is being studied, whether a specific area or areas has been finalized - Mr. Taberner discussed that the five districts that would be involved are Commercial Downtown, C1, General Residential 5, Single Family Residential 4, and Mixed Business Innovation; basically everything within a half mile of the train station. While concepts for areas outside of this radius are not the focus, they can still be shared.
- Question / discussion regarding the possibility of extending the area of focus further along 140 - Mr. Rondeau discussed how we may want to look at developing areas outside of the downtown that will be experiencing growth in the near future. TA Hellen discussed that for the purposes of this study with MAPC, the priority for the State, the Town Council and the Community was to look at the area surrounding the train station. We are expecting additional guidance regarding regulation from the State. TA Hellen also discussed that there is nothing prohibiting us from looking into other areas of town if

This is a meeting of the Franklin Town Council Sub-Committee; under the Open Meeting Law, this subcommittee is a separate "public body" from the Town Council. Therefore, unless the Town Council has separately noticed and posted its own meeting, Councilors who are not members of this subcommittee will not be permitted to speak or otherwise actively participate @ this meeting, although they may attend and observe. This prohibition is necessary to avoid the potential for an Open Meeting Law Violation

people come forward with ideas. We can use this downtown study as a conversation starter for the entire community.

- Discussion regarding why the focus is on downtown - Councilor Frongillo discussed that in addition to wanting a vibrant and prosperous downtown, we get the most value per acre, per service provided in the downtown. It brings in 2 to 3 times as much revenue per square foot than Franklin Village Mall and other areas. That's where we should start and then spread out incrementally from there.

2. Downtown parking follow up from the Town Council meeting on February 16, 2022.

TA Hellen introduced this agenda item as a follow up to the Town Council meeting on March 16, 2022 when the Council moved this issue to the EDC. This is an opportunity for the EDC members to give guidance to the Police Chief and Police Department staff regarding what they would like to learn more about in response to the parking issues that were brought up at the March 16th meeting.

Discussion followed in regard to the following topics:

- Dean College students or visitors parking in spaces that are not designated spaces
- Parking ticket fees - raising the current fee of \$15.00 per violation
- Number of tickets that violators need to receive before towing is permissible
- Parking signage
- Bylaw restrictions
- Overnight parking
- Additional police patrollings
- Parking permits or stickers system
- Parking zones & time requirements
- Striping
- Extending the 2 hour parking limit
- Expanding MBTA parking lot pass options & potential use of kiosks

Chair Hamblen adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.