

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
July 14, 2021**

Present: Chairman Janet Peckinpaugh, Peter Decker, Susan Malan, Robert Day, Betsy D'Amico

Absent: Brian Weinstein & Tom Nichols

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Peckinpaugh at 4:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Peter Decker to approve the June 2021 minutes. Susan Malan seconded.

INTRODUCTION:

We met at Essex Chocolates because the owner, Kelly Freis from had requested to meet with us. This is the reason for the change in location (was going to be Middle Beach). Unfortunately, Kelly never got back to Janet and once we got to the location, the employees told Janet that she was out of state. Possibly this will be rescheduled for another date. Janet made introductions to our visitor, Michael Dudich.

Visitors: Michael Dudich

Updates:

Janet let everyone know that Norm has decided that it is too expensive to put the temporary walkway in this summer. Right now, Jeff Paul will put in his part of a sidewalk and extend it onto Ferry St. Sometime after January, they will put the permanent sidewalk in.

Planning and Zoning Report:

July, 2021

The following applications relating to businesses and business use have seen activity since the last submission to the Essex EDC:

Approved Zoning Permits:

Application No. 21-87 – **85 Westbrook Road Naslas Engineering**, approval for an addition to an existing parking lot and drainage improvements.

Application No. 21-91 – **2 Essex Square**, approval of a sign for a psychologist's office.

Special Exception Applications: None

Site Plan Review Application: None

Approved Text Amendments:

PZC Application 21-3 Text Amendment to the Zoning Regulations Section 40I.2 Accessory Buildings- Essex Planning and Zoning Commission proposing text amendment to allow detached accessory structures no greater than 200 sq ft in size and 15 ft in height or less to be located not less than 5 ft from a side or rear property line and no less than 10 ft from side and rear lines for parcels deemed rear lots.

Accessory Dwelling Units

An application for a text amendment to add the River Road Residential (RRR) to the zones permitted to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) was approved at the July meeting.

Other updates

Route 9 Gateway Special Development District

John Guskowski and I have meet with large land holders within the Route 9 Gateway Area regarding the proposed Rt 9 Overlay Zone. The PZC would like to see a final proposed version at the August meeting and expect to send the proposed text amendment to a public hearing in September.

Parking Regulations

The PZC subcommittee plans to meet to look at the parking regulations in the Village but has not scheduled a time yet.

ACTION ITEMS: None

OLD BUSINESS: Janet wanted to know if anyone was able to visit businesses to gather emails. Peter said that it was hit or miss with businesses being open when he would try to visit. We have been hearing that businesses are struggling to stay open due to vendor availability and help.

NEW BUSINESS:

Michael was here to discuss the vacancy at the Liberty Bank site. This is a major gamechanger as this is the gateway to the center of town and anchors the block. It also has a parking lot which is a major benefit. How can we get a strong business or restaurant in there? This would help increase the tax base in Essex. Discussion about what our commission does for the town- we are here to guide businesses on planning and zoning issues as well as help with any questions they may have. This building is owned by Liberty Bank- they can sell to anyone they want. This is not a town owned building. We also would love to see a new restaurant or strong business in the space. If Liberty Bank reaches out to see about what type of business, they will certainly recommend that.

Upcoming Guests and Meeting Locations:

The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 11, 2021. We will figure out a place to meet, possibly Middle Cove.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Robert Day to adjourn the meeting at 4:44 p.m. Peter Decker seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Sadlowski, Commission Clerk