

Minutes

Economic Development Advisory Board

June 13, 2022 7:00PM

Held remotely via Zoom

Committee members in attendance (noted by Y/N):

Anne Meyers, Co-Chair	Y	Derrick Choi	Y	Carol Levin	Y	Marilyn Newman	Y
Paul Saner, Co-Chair	Y	Alan Christ	Y	Ken Lewis	Y	Al Raine	Y
Cliff Brown	Y	Sandi Silk	Y	Tom Nally	Y		

**Arrived late or left early*

Staff & consultants present: Meredith Mooney

Guests included: John VanScoyoc, Mike Sandman

Meeting Materials: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/2661>

- *Presentation: ARPA Round 1 Funded ED-LT Project Requests – April 2022*
- *Spreadsheet: Round 1 ARPA Funded Projects – April 2022*
- *Draft Minutes for May 24, 2022 Planning Discussion for Future EDAB Agenda Topics*
- *Draft Minutes for April 4, 2022 EDAB Minutes*
- *Housing Production Plan June 27, 2022 Community Forum Flyer*
- *Spring 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Article 30*

Meeting Recording:

https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/fdoUkz9JP9POidIkkaDBStyRgu8ice8RkV5rFRO2DCTOI3tvuRLU8o2BLdM_K6YL.xv75TZVc0xxrj-IJ

Opening Remarks

Anne opened the meeting noting that this is Meredith's first meeting as Economic Development Director.

Staff Update

Economic Development & Long-Term Planning Division Staffing

Meredith Mooney indicated that the Division is aiming to hire 3 new staff members, with the first 2 over the course of the summer.

Implementation of the Coolidge Corner & JFK Crossing Rapid Recovery Plan and Status of Local ARPA Funding Requests

Ms. Mooney provided the Board with an update on the Rapid Recovery Plan, with the following highlights:

- The Town's first round total ARPA budget was \$22 million and Economic Development initiatives received almost \$1.5 million.
- Implementation of ARPA-funded projects will proceed in 3 phases, starting in late Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023. Ms. Mooney provided some detail on the Small Business Relief Grant, a Traffic and Curb Management Study and Conceptual Planning Study for the Centre Street lot, the Commercial Area Arts Program, Public Parklets, the Storefront Pop-Up Program, and the grant for ADA-Friendly Restaurant improvements.
- \$50,000 is earmarked for ADA enhancements for Brookline restaurants. Final appropriation details are to be determined.

Board members asked the following questions:

- Derrick Choi asked if the Façade Loan Program was being funded through ARPA. Ms. Mooney said no but that it may be considered for the second phase of ARPA funding.
- Ken Lewis asked if the commercial area arts program is intended for temporary or permanent art. Ms. Mooney said that the goal is permanent art but that the program could also accommodate temporary art.
- Cliff Brown asked where the parklets would be in Washington Square and how many parking spaces they would use. He noted that the parklets might cut against the grain of Warrant Article 30 from Spring 2022 TM. Ms. Mooney identified a few possible spaces and said the parklet would take up 2 spaces.
- Anne Meyers noted that trash cans have not been part of the parklet installations in Brookline Village and Coolidge Corner and she believes they are necessary.
- Paul Saner asked if the traffic and curb management study could include "what-if" scenarios that study outcomes in the case of different developments in the surrounding area notably potential affordable housing on the Babcock St. lot. Ms. Mooney said it would be something to look into. Mr. Saner also asked for clarity on how the funding could be acquired. Ms. Mooney indicated it is something that still needs to be looked into.
- Sandi Silk suggested that the Town consider a sustained arts and entertainment program that runs throughout the year.

Ms. Mooney went into more detail on the status and funding of the Coolidge Corner & JFK Crossing Rapid Recovery Plan Projects. She indicated that the Arts & Culture Events Series and the Events Planning Guide were not funded. Ms. Mooney discussed recent progress on the Business Improvement District project.

Commercial Areas Update

Ms. Mooney provided the following highlights:

- Coolidge Corner: Brookline Day will be held in Coolidge Corner.
- St. Mary's: Whole Foods has left and neighborhood is hopeful that a new grocery store will replace it. More updates to follow. Mr. Choi asked what, if any, obstacles are presented by the Whole Foods site for grocery store businesses and also asked if the adjacent "food court" proposal is moving forward. Ms. Mooney indicated that the food court project at 1004-1016 Beacon Street has been approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Washington Square: 1717 Beacon (Star Market) has been acquired. New owner has no immediate plans to redevelop.
- Brookline Village: BV Business Association met for the first time since the beginning of Covid-19

The Board discussed recent progress on the Coolidge Corner Theater addition (under construction) and the Waldo-Durgin Development. Mr. Saner indicated that Waldo-Durgin has completed its review with the Design Advisory Team. Mr. Saner also noted that the Courtyard Marriott property had been sold at an undisclosed price.

Board Member Updates

2022 Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Saner provided the Board with an update on the Spring 2022 Town Meeting sessions, touching on the following topics:

- WA15 - Boylston Street East Corridor: The warrant article was not brought to a vote at Town Meeting. Tom Nally and John VanScoyoc indicated that the study is likely to return to Town Meeting in Fall 2022.
- WA30 - Kent Street Senior Housing Resolution: The warrant article was approved by Town Meeting and Mr. Saner recounted the negotiations leading to the final product and provided some details on expected next steps.
- WA16 – Storefront Depth: The warrant article passed Town Meeting almost unanimously. Mr. Saner discussed the difficulties experienced by commercial uses in Brookline and some of the underlying reasons.

US Open (Ken Lewis)

Mr. Lewis provided the Board with an update on the US Open, noting the following:

- Over \$368k in ticket sales raised for community organizations
- Brookline Chamber of Commerce will be sending a survey to businesses to assess impact of US Open on local businesses
- Signs and ESG initiatives were developed in coordination with local committees
- Ms. Levin asked what the Town's compensation agreement is like. Mr. Lewis indicated that it is something of a profit-sharing agreement. Mr. Brown said he believes most of the funds will go to repair/replace. Mr. Lewis said that there is a separate fund for repairs. Mr. Brown asked if there is a bottom-line net benefit. Mr. Lewis said he doesn't know that figure.

EDAB Agenda Planning (Sandi Silk)

Sandi Silk discussed the idea of holding a forum aimed at informing attendees about how economic development and the Town budget connect to school funding and the Town's overall economic landscape. She suggested that the forum could include an explanation of BFAC and its role, a review of EDAB's track record in pushing for fiscal growth, and highlights of how development projects and long-term plans result in fiscal growth.

- Mr. Brown felt it is a good idea but the specific audience needs to be identified. He also felt that other entities might want to be involved beyond EDAB.
- Mike Sandman echoed the comments of Mr. Brown and noted that there are several such presentations already in existence.
- Tom Nally also agreed with the comments of Mr. Sandman and Mr. Brown and suggested that what has worked/not worked in the past should be reviewed first.
- Ms. Levin also felt it is a good idea but cautioned that economic development not be represented as the be-all-end-all.

The Board discussed the timing of such a forum (prior to the Fall 2022 Town Meeting?) and the manner of hosting the forum. Collaborating with the Brookline Parents Organization was suggested and members of the Board suggested reaching out to a number of individuals for help.

Review and Approve Draft 4/4/2022 and 5/24/2022 Meeting Minutes

The Board voted 7-0-4 (Brown, Newman, Silk, Levin abstained) to approve the EDAB minutes of April 4, 2022 with a few edits.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda Planning Meeting minutes of May 24, 2022.

Miscellaneous Updates

Mr. Saner provided the following miscellaneous updates:

- 10 Brookline Place Committee meetings and progressive approaches are being contemplated. The Committee is aiming to bring articles too the Spring 2023 Town Meeting. Kudos to Ms. Mooney leading this over the last 6 weeks.
- Housing Production Plan's next meeting will focus on potential development sites. Some may be looked at for mixed use. Would be worth EDAB participating.
- Chestnut Hill West – an area cited by the Select Board Chair that should begin to be studied in 2023. Lots of possibilities that need to be investigated in the Western portion of route 9.
- George Pirokas – from Somerville's comp plan, is now the Watertown City Manager.
- River road parcels – 2 properties adjacent to the vet clinic immediately east of the Hilton have been approved for demolition. 2nd phase of redevelopment seems imminent.
- EDAB candidate – someone will be introduced at the next meeting
- Paul proposes to not meet over the summer – regroup in September

The meeting was adjourned.