

Economic Development Advisory Board Minutes

May 3, 2021

7 – 9 PM held remotely via Zoom

EDAB Board 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	Susan Houston	Y	Tom Nally	Y	Sandi Silk	Y

Staff present: Kara Brewton, Meredith Mooney, Victor Panak

Guests included: Caroline Shannon & Jonathan Fournier (Howeler & Yoone), Jeff Wachter, Linda Olson Pehlke, Danny Danesh, Jacob Sims, Ashley Clark, Jennifer Gilbert, Bobby Allen, Michael Maynard

Materials included: 5/3/21 agenda, draft 4/5/21 minutes, presentation on Coolidge Corner Theatre by Howeler & Yoone (5/3/21), Rapid Recovery presentation by Meredith Mooney (5/3/21)

Anne Meyers opened the meeting remotely via Zoom due to COVID, ensured all members were able to participate with audio and video, and announced that the meeting would be recorded.

Coolidge Corner Theatre Project Update

Michael Maynard (Coolidge Corner Theatre Board of Directors Chair), Jennifer Gilbert, Bobby Allen, Ashley Clark, Caroline Shannon, and Jonathan Fournier were all introduced as representing the Theatre. They reviewed the Theatre’s plans for expansion. The existing public parking area immediately to the south of the Theatre have eight spaces plus a loading dock nearest to their building, and then another four opposite the travel lane. The Planning Board asked the Theatre to remove the spaces on the Theatre side to make room for widened sidewalk on that side.

In response to a question, the Theatre alley will still have stairs nearest Harvard Street and the doors closest to Harvard Street will become egress only doors. EDAB members encouraged the Theatre to think of ways to fund people back to Harvard, for example: murals, light beacons pulling people to Harvard, helping other businesses and restaurants be promoted, more glass in the alleyway to see the decorative interior, improve the Upper Crust façade, etc. Michael Maynard noted that they have always had movie posters and alley seating. He also added that although they and Upper Crust have the same landlord, he didn’t think they could do anything about their façade.

Michael continued with his presentation, noting that the Zoning Board of Appeals granted waivers for Floor Area Ratio (FAR), but that they need to go back to Fall Town Meeting and adjust the Memorandum of Understanding with the Town regarding the parking to meet the Planning Board’s recommendations. They need to finalize with the Select Board the change of easement boundaries for both the Town and the Theatre, and they needed to finalize the 99-year air rights agreement to enable the theatre to expand by cantilevering over the public property. They expect to break ground after July 4th, and expect

the construction will be Monday through Friday, 7 am – 4 pm, and be a 14-month project. They will remain open during construction.

While they have been closed except for private events due to COVID, they open to reopen on May 13th with a capacity of 68 people, hoping to be fully open by late summer.

14 Green Street Discussion, including commercial rent subsidy proposal

Bobby Allen presented the plans for 14 Green Street, noting that the commercial space will go from the 7,500 square foot restaurant space to a 555 square foot space built for a café, with some basement storage. They are seeking setback relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals, and are thinking about offering reduced retail rent as a counterbalancing amenity.

EDAB members discussed:

- Having a renewal rent that is a percentage of “market” rent just sets up the process to be easily manipulated and is very cumbersome
- Free rent for retail and café space has been offered as part of mixed-use projects in the region, e.g., the Pioneer in Everett by Post Road Residential.
- Offering build out costs at the beginning of the lease might be a cleaner offer, at maybe \$250 per square foot
- Since the building will be a condominium, this lends itself to a deed restriction being offered for either an independent and/or minority/women-owned business.
- Liked the idea of offering a percentage of rent reduction, but not triple net (net utilities, taxes, and insurance).
- Uncertainty of whether any retail would be a public amenity (e.g., nail salon)
- Since the relief being requested is permanent, the subsidy should also be attached to the property as an ongoing restriction, not just at the build-out phase.
- Should be restricted to businesses that could only start up because of the subsidy being offered
- Cautious about imposing this restriction, as it could be duplicated for all mixed-use properties

After further discussion, EDAB agreed that Sandi Silk and Paul Saner would continue to work with Bobby Allen on some draft condition language for the Zoning Board of Appeals to consider.

Rapid Recovery Plan Process Update

Meredith Mooney noted that the survey results would be discussed at a May 26th meeting, 6 pm, hopefully to be attended by both EDAB and the Small Business Development Committee. Projects that might be recommended as part of this plan would need to be related to recovering from COVID impacts, and be long-term projects. Following further discussion, EDAB recommended that the Sustainability, Residential viewpoints, Equity, and maybe connectivity/accessibility should be criteria that are cross-sections to the other focus groups, not focus groups on their own. Derrick Choi & Anne Meyers offered to help Meredith Mooney with the design of the focus group questions.

Committee Member & Staff Updates including Warrant Articles & Town Meeting

Paul Saner updated the Board on the status of various warrant articles:

- Outdoor Seating articles have been overwhelmingly approved by the Select Board and Advisory Committee; the Planning Board has also recommended the article related to zoning.
- Warrant Article 39, related to the Babcock Street lot resolution, was voted down by the Advisory Committee, and he did not think the Select Board would likely vote for it either.

Cliff Brown added there was even less support for the resolution related to Fisher Hill as promises were made to the general voter that the Town would look at a variety of uses, not just housing, for the portion of the former Newbury Campus purchased by the Town.

Sandi Silk & Derrick Choi gave an update on the retail panel for EDAB's June meeting, which would include Graffito, Conviser, and Alison Ye from Popping Up Next. They hoped that the panel would be educational to us as well as the community. Paul Saner would forward the notice to the Town Meeting listserve.

Ken Lewis described the grand opening at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Approval of April 5 2021 meeting minutes

April 5, 2021 meeting minutes were approved by roll call vote (in favor: AM, PS, CB, AC, CL, KL, TN, MN, AR, SS; abstained: SH, DC).

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.