

Essex Strategic Planning Committee & Economic Development Committee

Joint Meeting

March 19, 2018

Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 30 Martin Street

MINUTES

SPC Members Present: David Gabor, Chair, Mike Burke, Vice Chair, Charlie McNeil, John Bediz, Andrew Spinney, Julie Scofield, Westley Burnham, Michele French, Annie Cameron

EDC Members Present: Michael Cataldo, Chris Larson, Georganne Richards, Donna Roy, Gayle McKinley, Westley Burnham, Martha Marino.

Staff Present: Brendhan Zubricki, Town Administrator, Matt Coogan, Town Planner

Mr. Gabor called the meeting to order at 7:30.

Public Comment - None.

Minutes - The approval of the meeting minutes for the January 31, 2018 SPC meeting was made by Mr. Bediz, seconded by Mr. Spinney, and unanimously approved by SPC members with one abstention (Ms. Cameron).

Mr. Gabor invited EDC members to introduce themselves, since this was the first meeting of the Economic Development Committee. Each discussed their background and their interest in serving on the committee.

Strategic Plan Update and discussion with EDC on action items - Mr. Coogan provided the EDC some background on the efforts of the SPC Committee and the Town's Strategic Plan. Two of the highest priority goals for the plan is to "Maintain a Strong Business Community" and "Renew and Finance Critical Town Infrastructure". The creation of the EDC was a critical action items in the implementation to meet these two goals, and the SPC and Board of Selectmen envisioned the EDC creating a work plan to focus on these two goals.

Economic Development Discussion - Mr Gabor opened up a general economic development discussion. SPC members discussed the need to broaden the tax base by creating more economic development and more businesses to relieve the tax burden for residents. Members also discussed whether there is land in Town suitable for commercial development. The SPC members also identified quality of life as a driving factor for creating the EDC and for the Town to focus on Economic Development.

Discussion on potential future presentation to SPC, EDC, and Community Preservation Committee by Harborlight Community Partners, relative to affordable housing opportunities - Mr Zubricki mentioned that he had been in touch with Harborlight Community

Partners, a local organization specializing in developing affordable housing. The organization had been looking for potential projects sites in Essex and was willing to come discuss their experience and expertise in affordable housing. Affordable housing was part of one of the nine goals of the Strategic Plan, "Meet the Housing Needs of All Residents". Housing is directly related to economic development, and Mr. Zubricki recommended that Harborlight attend a future joint meeting of the SPC and EDC. The SPC is scheduled for their next quarterly meeting in June, and Mr. Zubricki and Mr Coogan would coordinate the joint meeting.

Election of a EDC Chair - Mr. Zubricki discussed the need for the new committee to choose a Chair and Vice Chair to work with Mr. Coogan on coordinating the Committee and running future meetings. Ms. Marino expressed interest in chairing the committee, and Mr. Loring was interested in becoming Vice Chair.

A motion to nominate Ms. Marino as Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee was made by Mr. Loring, seconded by Mr. Cataldo, and unanimously approved by EDC members.

A motion to nominate Mr. Loring as Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee was made by Ms. Marino, seconded by Mr. Cataldo, and unanimously approved.

Mr. Gabor adjourned the meeting at 8:45.