

Town of Belmont Economic Development Committee (EDC)

Location: Remote meeting via Zoom

Wednesday January 21, 2021, 7:00 pm

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 16, 2021

TIME: 2:45 PM

In attendance: Erin Brown, Wendy Etkind, Deran Muckjian, Emma Thurston, Ed Starzec, Suzanne Schalow

Also in attendance: Jon Marshall

Members absent: None

The committee recognizes the unfortunate passing of Jeffrey Wheeler.

**1. Call to order at 7:05 pm.**

**2. Approval of meeting minutes**

W Etkind reviewed the meeting minutes from the October 28, 2020 meeting.

*Motion: approval of meeting minutes. Vote passed 4-0, by all members: Deran Muckjian, Emma Thurston, Wendy Etkind, Erin Brown.*

**3. Introduction of new members, appointment of a chair**

Suzanne Schalow – Craft Beer Cellar. Member of the Belmont Business Study, opening a food business imminently for take-away, approved for 160 seats.

Gaby Salas has been removed from the committee, solicited volunteers for new Chair and Vice Chair.

*Motion: approval of Emma Thurston for position of Chair. Vote passed 6-0, by all members: Deran Muckjian, Emma Thurston, Wendy Etkind, Erin Brown, Suzanne Schalow, Ed Starzec.*

*Motion: approval of Erin Brown for position of Vice Chair. Vote passed 6-0, by all members: Deran Muckjian, Emma Thurston, Wendy Etkind, Erin Brown, Suzanne Schalow, Ed Starzec.*

**4. Update on apprenticeship program**

Questionnaire is in development, will be used to send to applicants for interns. E Brown connected with Alice Melnikoff from the school to get framework. Committee will use an intern to help maintain the data ase. One intern is working now, program is starting to roll out.

**5. Grant Programs**

Small business grants are posted on the town's web site when the town is made aware of them. J Marshall will proactively send this information out to businesses when they become available.

#### Local Rapid Recovery Program

J Marshall applied on behalf of the town, explained the process and asked for Committee consideration to move forward with this program. It's a planning opportunity, no implementation funds or funds for businesses. If awarded, the process entails a consultant doing research to understand impacts from COVID, and lay out plan to move forward. He responded for Waverly, Cushing and the Center, however the committee can only select one location. The committee raised concerns about other areas of town being left out, and discussed how to make this program as inclusive as possible. The committee nominated the Trapelo-Waverly corridor to span multiple business districts and as a way to expand impact of this grant. Additional need, if awarded, is to get businesses engaged and put them in touch with the program's consultants.

*Motion: approval to move forward with the program, with the selected business zone of the Trapelo-Waverly Corridor. Vote passed 6-0, by all members: Deran Muckjian, Emma Thurston, Wendy Etkind, Erin Brown, Suzanne Schalow, Ed Starzec.*

6. **TrackTheRecovery data/website presentation and observations on local Q4 2020 covid-19 impact**  
45% of MA businesses closed in the past year.

Discussion of current observations of business climate.

#### **7. New business**

No new business discussed

#### **8. Prior Business/ updates**

- Database updates – E Starzec offered to help update the list.
- E Thurston asked the committee to share recommendations for 2021 EDC priorities.
- The committee plans to send meeting agendas to local businesses to get input in these meetings in an effort to foster more community and business engagement.

#### **9. Public comment**

No public comment.

#### **10. Upcoming meetings**

EDC meetings will be scheduled every other week on Wednesdays going forward, will alternate between morning and evening.

For next meeting, we'll plan and prioritize our 2021 objectives.

**11. Adjourned at 8:55 pm.**