

Town of Belmont Economic Development Committee (EDC)

Location: Remote meeting via Zoom

Wednesday February 10, 2021, 8:00 am

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 18, 2021

TIME: 10:00 AM

In attendance: Erin Brown, Wendy Etkind, Emma Thurston, Suzanne Schalow

Members absent: Deran Muckjian, Ed Starzec

Not in attendance: Jon Marshall

**1. Call to order at 8:24 am.**

**2. Approval of meeting minutes**

W Etkind reviewed the meeting minutes from the January 21, 2021 meeting.

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

Suggestion made to send out meeting notes prior to meeting to expedite approval of meeting minutes. W Etkind will start with this next meeting.

**3. Review of membership**

Status of New member Stacey? E Brown will follow up with applicant to get status. If no longer interested, we have another applicant who's eager to participate.

**4. Update on apprenticeship program**

Program descriptions sent to Alice Melnikoff who is very supportive of the program. Two intern needs are identified: (1) Business Contact Database, and (2) Research on Business District Social Media Presence Analysis

Both will report to members of the EDC committee.

If successful, discussed possible expansion to local college students (future objective).

**5. Local rapid recovery program update**

We did get accepted for the grant for the Trapelo corridor! Next steps: we will be matched up with a consultant and get further information, timing TBD. J Marshall will keep us posted.

**6. Review Goals and prioritize action items**

Began brainstorm of potential goals for the committee:

1. **Town Coordinator Position/ Business Support** – not likely to get budget for a person, but town will need to replace Jeffrey Wheeler. Emma is going to ask the town what the job description looks like and whether this could morph to include that role, also who is currently covering for Jeffrey while we are waiting for that role to be filled.
2. **Business Community Round Table discussion** – what issues are people facing? Structure as presenting the priorities we've identified, what they are, and get feedback on which to do first, what's missing, solicit volunteers to help solve them.
3. **Build a Town-wide Business Community** - Engagement with Belmont Center Business Association and expansion beyond the center, or joining a Chamber of Commerce. Belmont Center has a web site, will be revising it in near future and if approved we can include this plan.
4. **"Jeffrey Wheeler Business Mentoring Program"** – partner an experienced business with a new business to help them through the process of opening a business. How to communicate to businesses?
5. **Creation of a Business directory** – possible opportunity for an intern.
6. **New Business Opening Guidance via Town Website** – start with a process analysis and then document it on the web site.
7. **EDC Facebook page** – a way to communicate our initiatives to businesses and residents.
8. **Review permitting and zoning bylaws compared to neighboring town** – where does the "not business friendly" perception come from? How do we compare to other towns similar to us.
9. **Expansion of Community events** – quarterly events in different areas of Belmont. Ways to generate revenue and raise community support.

## 7. New business

Recommendation to help unify and re-charge different business districts (#3 above), suggestion to follow the model from the Belmont Center Business Association in the absence of an "umbrella organization". S Schalow will write up a proposal on behalf of the EDC to bring businesses together for discussion and touch base with D Muckjian before moving forward.

## 8. Public comment

No public comment.

## 9. Upcoming meetings

To get going and build momentum on 2021 committee goals and priorities, the committee agreed to meet on Wed 2/17 at 7pm and Wed 2/24 at 7pm.

## 10. Adjourned at 9:30 am.