

Select Board Meeting

February 14, 2022

Remote Meeting

7:00 PM

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 7, 2022

TIME: 2:43 PM

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Select Board was called to order by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Roy Epstein and Select Board member Mark Paolillo were present, along with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Acting Assistant Town Administrator Glenn Clancy, Director of Health Wesley Chin and Town Clerk Ellen Cushman.

Open Joint Meeting with Economic Development Committee

Chair Emma Thurston, called the Economic Development Committee to order with a roll call quorum. (Present: Erin Brown, Wendy Etkind, Deran Muckjian, Paul Joy, Ed Starzec, and Katherine Venzke.)

Economic Development Committee update and discussion on grants

[Emma Thurston gave a presentation with slides.]

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) had four central foci in 2021:

- Local Rapid Recovery Program – state sponsored program focused on the Trapelo Rd. Corridor. Used consultant to hold focus groups for community input and had 258 pg. documents for grants and projects guidance.
- Built cohesive database for contact info for Belmont business owners. The living document resides with the Community Development Office.
- Launched online directory of Belmont businesses as a mechanism for marketing.
- Advocating for grant funding from the state.

Gabe Distler from Community Development gave update on the grants in process. Belmont received \$25K grant for consulting services for downtown initiative. This is part of the One Stop for Growth Program. The EDC is working with the Town to plan and design wayfinding along Trapelo Road. Priority projects outlined in the 2021 Rapid Recovery Report will be the focus of the grants. Gabe has been the liaison for the EDC since John Marshall's departure.

March 8th is the tentative date for the Public Forum about the plans for Waverly Square.

2022 Recommendations from the EDC:

1) Hire a short-term Economic Development Coordinator (12-18 months). This position would require the backing of the Select Board. ARPA funds are being used in other towns for similar positions.

Katherine Venzke said that the role of the Economic Development Coordinator could include the following responsibilities:

- reach out to landlords of vacant properties

- organize meetings with Town centers
- execute business working capital initiatives and execute initiatives from grants.

2) Create a Small Business Grant Fund. Deran Muckjian thinks that in the near future, there will be a 20% vacancy situation in Belmont. Currently, there are seven vacancies in Town. He feels that many small businesses could be saved by taking a proactive approach.

3) Continue to pursue funding and grants. EDC worked with Stantec to develop grant funding programs and were made aware of the grant opportunities that are available.

4) Finalize outdoor dining plans and dates by March 2022 in order to optimize results. Last year the outdoor dining endeavor in Belmont Center was supported in large part with a sizeable private donation. Relying on the same donor may not be the optimal plan.

Paolillo said that \$100K earmarked for EDC initiatives from that state money should be separate from ARPA. Paolillo asked Emma to frame what the plans are for the \$100K first and then the ARPA money can be discussed. Emma said she will send a list of the ideas for the \$100K to the Select Board.

Motion was made by Emma Thurston to adjourn the Economic Development Committee. Motion was approved by a quorum.

Close Joint Meeting with Economic Development Committee