



## TOWN OF TEWKSBURY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Meeting Minutes January 14, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by David Plunkett, Chairman at the Pike House. Present were David Gay, Brian Linder, Patricia Lelos, Larry Sanford, and Richard Montuori.

#### Approval of meeting minutes – June 19, 2013

**MOTION:** Mr. Gay made the motion to approve the June 19, 2013 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Plunkett and the motion carried 2-0-3.

#### A) Welcome New Members

Mr. Plunkett welcomed Ms. Lelos, Mr. Linder and Mr. Sanford as new members on the Economic Development Committee. Mr. Sanford will serve as the Finance Committee's representative.

Mr. Montuori noted that he and Mr. Sadwick will now serve as ex officio members.

#### B) ED Presentation – Town Manager

Mr. Montuori explained that Mr. Sadwick has provided the members with a copy of the presentation he gave to the Board of Selectmen on November 5, 2013.

Mr. Montuori reviewed portions of the presentation. Discussion took place on the available parcels in town for development. Mr. Montuori noted that among the available sites are: two parcels at Radcliff Road, the old Wang site on North Street, along East Street, and Woburn Street. Mr. Montuori explained that there is an existing development on Woburn Street in which the owner is looking to lease. There is also the potential to expand at this site. The lot is located in both Tewksbury and Lowell. Mr. Montuori explained that every site is unique and zoned differently and has potential. The largest site available is the Simon Property near Rt. 93 and is zoned for retail. Mr. Montuori explained that Simon still owns the property and has discussed possibly putting a solar farm at this location. The drawback to this site is the town does not want to allow local access to South Street. Mr. Plunkett noted that the Zoning Bylaw Subcommittee has put solar farms on their next agenda and Mr. Sadwick was going to look into how the City of

Lowell recently handled this as well as contact the Town of Westford who recently passed a bylaw to allow for solar farms. Mr. Gay asked if solar farms are revenue generating and Mr. Montuori explained it is revenue generator from a tax stand point, but another benefit is the town can receive some energy deals and incentives.

Mr. Montuori explained, for the benefit of the new members, that the Economic Development has been active for over 4 years and reviewed some of the items the Committee has completed; which include creating an Economic Target Area (ETA) that allows the town to provide tax incentives to businesses who are interested in locating in town and developing a Business and Community Guide to be given out to businesses and realtors. Mr. Montuori discussed Thermo Fisher and explained how they have taken advantage of the tax incentives.

Mr. Montuori reviewed what attracts businesses to a town:

- 1) Location - Tewksbury has no problem with location as there is access to Route. 495, Route 93, Route 3, Southern New Hampshire and Southern Maine.
- 2) Land – Mr. Montuori noted that location is always a challenge for any community; Tewksbury has a decent inventory.
- 3) Infrastructure – Mr. Montuori noted that Tewksbury has both sewer and water and has worked to improve the infrastructure over the last several years. The roads could use some improvement.
- 4) Workforce
- 5) Quality of Life – Mr. Montuori explained that often businesses will take their senior management around the community to view the area. Education, safety, etc. are important.
- 6) Reasonable taxes and fees - Mr. Montuori explained that there is a split tax rate so Tewksbury is higher than average, but still lower than some of the surrounding communities. Water and sewer rates are among the highest in the State, but the town has invested more in the infrastructure over the last 10 years than any other community. Those communities will now need to make those investments.
- 7) Prompt permitting process - Mr. Montuori explained that in his experience the applicants that do not have the required information are the ones who state the process is long. Those that have completed the application properly and provided all of the required information move along rather quickly. Mr. Plunkett noted that it is very rare that a matter goes beyond two Planning Board meetings and can be approved in one meeting if all of the necessary information is submitted as required.

Mr. Montuori noted that Tewksbury does have a good reputation as being business friendly and that he was recently speaking with Peter Milano from Massachusetts Office

of Business Development who frequently contacts the town when he has businesses looking for locations. Mr. Gay suggested having Mr. Milano come back to a meeting.

Mr. Sanford asked what percentage of town has access to natural gas. Mr. Montuori noted that he is not sure but can look into this.

Mr. Montuori noted that the presentation also includes future economic development. Mr. Montuori's biggest concern is Rte. 38

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Approved: 2/11/14*

**No documents submitted for 1/14/14 Agenda**