

**Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes - August 21, 2023 @ 6:30 pm**

Committee Chair: Susan DiPesa

The mission of the Economic Development Commission is to enhance the existing business community, attract new business, attract new customers, and encourage redevelopment and new development as may be advisable in order to increase the Town's property tax revenues, income, job base, and overall economic health.

**Date:** August 21, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

**Location: Hybrid:** Zoom/Town Library

**Attendees:** Sue DiPesa (chair), Susanne Hofmeister (co-chair), Geena Savage, Paul Bartkiewicz, Berry Kurland, Grace Gardner and Susan Daileader

**Members of the public:** Karen Canfield (Selectboard), Seth Pfeiffer (Scit TV), Amy Linnell (NBA), Lynda Ferguson (Advisory)

**Call to Order:** Sue DiPesa called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**Meeting Minutes:** Geena makes a motion to approve the June minutes with editing the correct name for the band stand manager and Susi seconds it. All are in favor. June minutes are approved with edits.

**Agenda:**

Old/New Business:

- Call to Order
- Introductions
- Approve Minutes
- Review, approve and sign pending bills – Review approved bills under the Municipal Modernization Act

Chairperson Report: Sue Di Pesa

Select Board: Karen Canfield

Committee Reports:

- SHARC - Paul Bartkiewicz
- Cole Parkway - Susan Daileader
- Communications - Berry Kurland and Grace Gardner
- Community Leaders Forum - Sue Di Pesa
- Scituate Visitors Center - Susi Hofmeister

Business District Reports:

- North Scituate: Amy Linnell
- Greenbush: Shelley Swanson

Other Business:

- Review of Beach Commission Pilot Program
  - Visitor Beach Parking Program

Adjourn

Next Meeting: September 25, 2023

### **Chairperson Report - Sue DiPesa:**

Sue outlines the mission EDC will pursue this year, promoting tourism in Scituate. EDC members are invited to take a look at the 2014 EDC study, which is published on the EDC town's website: [https://www.scituatema.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3781/f/pages/scituate\\_economic\\_development\\_study\\_december\\_2014.pdf](https://www.scituatema.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3781/f/pages/scituate_economic_development_study_december_2014.pdf)

In this study, there is an interesting set of goals and strategies for EDC. She also suggest to look at the Town's Masterplan 2040 [https://www.scituatema.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3781/f/pages/20210625\\_scituate2040\\_master\\_plan\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.scituatema.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3781/f/pages/20210625_scituate2040_master_plan_final_0.pdf). The Masterplan states: In order to grow the tax base needed to fund expensive infrastructure projects, the Town will need to devise a strategy for sustainable economic development. One way to do this is to better leverage Scituate's attractive resources to enhance the tourism industry and capture more revenue. Scituate has a unique opportunity to combine coastal and inland tourism by leveraging access to Scituate Harbor with access to trails and conservation land. The Town should consider a marketing program that incorporates both and ties access from the commuter rail to access by bike or shuttle so that visitors do not have to drive. EDC has a lot of work to do, but it will support these efforts as best as it can do. EDC heard a lot from conversations with the Scituate Visitors Center group and knows that the Town must do a better job of preparing for visitor's and resident's enjoyment, as well. The obvious preparations are **restrooms, landscaping, transportation, parking, historical attraction access, harbor WiFi and most importantly provide excellent communication to the public**. EDC will be the vehicle that will lead to these improvements. Grace and Berry worked on preliminary plans for pulling a lot of these things together with developing surveys for businesses and residents. The goal will be to bring various business groups together and to enhance communication within the town, so that EDC can engage more people and achieve economic development.

### **Selectboard Report - Karen Canfield:**

The Selectboard had their annual retreat. This year's goals are **sewer for North Scituate**. They dedicated money for a design to sewer North Scituate with our local sewer plant in fiscal year 2025. Karen will give us and update on the capacity of our town's sewer plant and on the steps the town will take until 2025 when the design will start, to improve the capacity for North Scituate. The town will still work on the regional sewer program with Cohasset and Hull, but must work on a local solution if the regional plan does not move forward. Another goal for this year is the **reuse of the Old Gates school**. A developer for affordable senior housing is interested in the site and the Selectboard waits for his proposal. Another main priority is **better communication**. The board approved a part-time position for a media outreach specialist, and is beginning to interviewing candidates for this position. And the last thing the Board is focusing on is the **fiscal planning**. The state is in the red right now and the town is nervous about their next state funding. So, the board has to take a look internally how to maximize the use of the available funds that they have to make sure that they can meet the residents' needs. Those are the four primary things the Board is focusing on. The special Town Meeting is planned for October 16th. On the agenda are mostly housekeeping items but there maybe one or two CPC articles. There are capital items and two citizen's petitions: One is for a revision to the dog leash bylaw and the other one is for allocation of seven million dollars to Cedar Point for seawall repairs. Other news from town are, there is a group working on creating more pickle ball courts in town, they will work together with recreation to see, where a good location might be. The repairs of Scituate Light House is still on track and the



date to put the lantern back on is Halloween. The TA is looking to refill the position of the director of planning and economic development with a new position of assistant town administrator. This position is expected to be posted very soon. The new water treatment plant is on budget and on time with their design. The construction is expected to begin in May of 2024 and being online in July of 2026. Another important information is, that the MBTA chapter 3A requirements for affordable housing in MBTA communities was finally tweaked, so that mixed housing is now counting for the chapter 3A requirements.

**Discussion:** *Sewer for North Scituate*

A public meeting about the town's plans for sewer in North Scituate should be planned soon. First the town should work on a timeline for both projects, the regional sewer project and the local in town solution. Then, a public meeting should be organized to inform residents and business- and property owners about the sewer project. This would give everybody a better idea, how and when to invest in their businesses or properties and it would create more trust from the public into the town's work.

**Discussion:** *EDC grant application*

The town attorney made extensive insurance requirements to receive funds from the town. It was discussed that if somebody would receive funds for marketing, you do not need insurance, but if you get money for an event, like the Heritage Days, you need insurance. The EDC grant application should be posted on the Town's EDC website.

**Committee Report:**

- *SHARC*:- The SHARC is in discussion with permitting agencies and is entering into the phase 3 contract. Things are moving along. Construction is still planned for 2025, but they will need a chapter 91 permit. <https://www.mass.gov/guides/chapter-91-the-massachusetts-public-waterfront-act>
- *Cole Parkway* - Susan Daileader: The RFPs should be back in end of August, when they will have their next meeting. The aerial data recorded with drones were inconclusive.
- *EDC grant application* - Geena Savage: EDC grant application was finalized and approved by the town. To publish it on the EDC town's website, EDC has to decide what content has to be unpublished to create room for the grant application. Geena will look into the Way Finding PDF and see, if we can connect it to the grant application or if we move it to another space. The grant application has to be downloaded and digitally filled out and emailed to the town.
- *Communication* - Berry Kurland and Grace Gardner: The goal is to becoming experts in the needs of the local business community and to strengthening communications in order to better serve the community. We identified 5-6 stakeholders and we will start communication with them via a stakeholder survey. This survey has to be easy to do, should come at the right time, should ask relevant questions. Next to the survey, there will be one-on-one communications, too and after feedback from survey comes back, more in depth discussion will follow. The second two sets of stakeholders would be the Selectboard and the Planning Board and the town hall. Understanding the needs of the

Selectboard and understanding how EDC can fit in the Selectboard's priority of communication (one of their four top priorities this year) will lead us to work together with the Selectboard to better communication in town. And we will have to ask the Town Hall on how to deliver things. Other boards and commissions are stakeholders too, and EDC's role here should be the coordinating ability and understanding what all the other groups and boards and commissions can do and how the EDC could direct business people to these other groups to help them. Or if there is not something set up, move into problem solving. One solution could be, to contact thriving business owners and let them tell how they overcame obstacles and take their learnings and pass them along. The last stakeholder would be citizens, residents, the public. Communicate to the public what EDC is doing. Feature documents on our website and make sure the public understands how to access and use EDC as a resource. The priorities of these stakeholders will be implemented in a final plan and discussed at our next EDC meeting in September. The goal will be to create a sustainable service organization. **As a homework for all EDC members, please think of questions you want to see in a survey.** The Scituate Loves Local Business Survey could serve as a starting point.

- *Advisory* - Lynda F.: Advisory did not start the new fiscal year yet. But Lynda gave an overall positive update on Heritage Day's. Restaurants were busy and the Chamber got good feedback from their vendors. The weather was gorgeous. Plymouth County Development Council had the first cruise ship come into Plymouth harbor. It is coming in four times this year. It is not a huge cruise ship, but getting them to stop there and getting all the businesses open on Sunday is a great way to get more business in. They are also looking into building a convention center and pairing it with a hotel in Plymouth. If this goes through, it would help the whole Plymouth County. The regional tourism centers are working on another tax, like Meet Boston has done. They will form a committee to convince hotels in Plymouth County to agree on paying 1% or 2% in taxes, which would go directly into tourism. It won't be easy to convince hotel owners, because they already pay 9,7 % in taxes already.
- *Community Leader's Forum*- Sue D.: The first meeting was held in December of 2022. EDC invited several committees and organizations in town to discuss topics like tourism, and coordination of event planning. TA Jim Boudreaux gave a few remarks, Peter Foreman from the South Shore Chamber of Commerce spoke and See Plymouth was there. We asked what their organizations need and if they had any events they were hoping to produce and what their busy times were and what there slow times were. The energy was great, and connections were made. In the spring the forum rallied around one town wide event and held a sort of planning meeting in June. As it turned out, the forum was unable to go through with it, which was disappointing. But the forum has an active group which will meet again in the fall. This would be a great group for beginning on working on communication. This may also help to design the survey and the forum could rekindle the idea of planning events for the off season.
- *Scituate Visitors Center*- Susi H.: The SVC has not met in the last weeks, and will give a report next month. SVC has a new banner and one is located at Nona's Ice Cream. SVC will observe if this will create more traffic on the SVC website: <https://>



[scituatevisitorscenter.com/](http://scituatevisitorscenter.com/)

- *North Scituate Village* - Amy L.: Installation of kiosk will be done by August 31st at the playground in North Scituate. Fall for Scituate is organized by Jean DiGiacomandrea from the Scituate Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club will half sponsor it. It was the NBA in the past, but all the business owners are busy, and this is the better solution going forward. Businesses are still involved, like Amy is doing the Kid's Zone and is sponsoring that. Fall for Scituate is on Sunday, October 15th from 12 pm to 4 pm. Overall, North Scituate is doing very well and is a great place for services. It has good parking and all the businesses are doing very well for along time.
- *Greenbush* - Shelley Swanson: Shelley could not attend today's meeting, but she sent a written report. Kennedy's hired an events director earlier this year, and they have been hosting numerous events this summer. Kjeld Mahoney (also at Kennedy's) hosted a Jaws themed art show in July, which saw record attendance. Untold and Greenbush Package Store co-hosted a very successful beer garden at Heritage Days. Sky Sail (the new development next to MBTA) has not yet opened, no news when they will.

#### **Discussion:** *Beach Commission Pilot Program*

Somebody from the beach commission will come to EDC and give a presentation. They are asking EDC for feedback, they already got some feedback from the Selectboard. The Beach Commission wants to launch a visitor beach parking program. There is a problem for visitors who stay in the Scituate Inn or in one of the summer rentals to get to the town's beaches. Daily Out of Town Beach passes that are valid on Tuesdays and Thursdays only for Peggotty Beach are available for sale at the Harbormaster's Office for \$20 per day. Only 8 of those passes were purchased in 2022. The Beach Commission wants to initiate weekday beach passes (Monday to Friday) for \$20/day and no more than 20 passes per day. And these passes should be valid for all Scituate beaches, not only Peggotty.

The EDC would like to know, what the money from the sale of those passes would be used for (20 passes per day, would result in \$2000 per week). Also, the EDC would like to see data about availability of parking spaces of the local beaches in July and August. You can't sell spaces you don't have. Who is going to reinforce parking? What happens if someone buys all 20 passes for one beach, like Minot? After having data for available space, render the offer, like 1 pass for Minot per day, 6 for Peggotty (as an example). Maybe work of off-site parking lot in the summer with transportation or bike lanes. Maybe, a marketing program to inform visitors to take the T to Greenbush and take the Sloop to the beaches, or park in Cole Parkway and take the Sloop to beaches would work better. If people would park in the harbor, they might will get a pizza after or if they park in Greenbush, they might grab a beer. There might be grants available for marketing, if you try to enhance ridership in the T. Maybe, try this as an explicit trial and see what data come back, how much demand is there for passes, what is the impact on residential parking? The Beach Commission should work closely with the Bicycle Commission to research the probability having bike lanes, bike rentals etc. Maybe the mostly empty MBTA parking lots on Saturday and Sunday could be vitalized for beach parking, if transportation to beaches would be provided.

**Other Business:**

Next EDC meeting: October 23rd, 2023

**Adjournment 8:03 pm**

Respectfully submitted: Susanne Hofmeister 09/24/2023

*Approved 10/11/23*