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## **Economic Development Committee**

Minutes of the Public Meeting of  
November 8, 2023 at 7:00 PM  
Town Hall, Third Floor, Meeting Room A  
542 Liberty Street, Hanson, MA02341

### **Members Present**

- Laura Fitzgerald-Kemmett, Chairperson
- Kevin Cohen, Vice Chairperson
- Chris Ernest, Clerk via Zoom

### **Absent**

- Ken Sweezey, Member
- Dan Bathalon, Member

### **Others Present**

- Tony DeFrias, Town Planner
- Kimberly Cunningham, Economic Development Committee Administrative Assistant

### **Call to Order**

At 7:07 PM the Hanson Economic Development Committee was called to order by Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett.

### **Minutes**

**Chairperson Fitzgerald-Kemmett stated:** "I would like to announce for those that are in attendance, that this meeting is being recorded for distribution on the Whitman/Hanson Community Access Page. Play back times and other related information on this recording can be found on WHCHA.TV. Our audio is being recorded and will be published."

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** was made by Mr. Cohen to approve October 11, 2023 meeting minutes.  
Motion seconded by Mr. Ernest. **Voted 3-0-0.**

## **I. Discussions**

### **1. Presentation by Melissa Johnston on reutilization of the former Plymouth County Nurses Quarters – 228 High Street.**

*Melissa Johnston is a licensed Mental Health Counselor and has her own private practice in Hanover. She has a vision that the Nurses Quarters on High Street could be the perfect setting for a Wellness Center in town. Melissa shared the fact that Hanson is missing mental health services that are much needed in this day and age. She shared a detailed power point presentation with the Committee explaining the need for these services in town and how the Nurses Quarters would be the ideal location. Focused services would include individual, family, couple and group counseling. There would also be supervision of internship, training, and continuing education classes for licensed counselors. The presentation included a vision of the building updated with keeping the history of the structure. By utilizing this historical building it will help with the mental health of our community, bring in revenue for the town, and be close by to the walking trails in the area.*

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett shared: The question is where will we find the money for this project? There are many steps to get this building into compliance. She then asked for Mr. DeFrias thoughts on the situation.

Mr. DeFrias stated: He applied for a one million dollars grant for under utilized properties through the One Stop program but it was turned down this year however, he plans to apply again for next year. He has received estimates for the update of those two buildings and it would be around \$4.5 million dollars.

*They then discuss the opportunities the building may hold in the future and what other Committees may be able to assist with support and finances, the involvement of the town, potential donations, help from local trade schools, and addressing the possibilities at the Town Meeting. At the end of the discussion it is suggested to reach out to the Building Inspector to see what the next steps may be.*

Mr. Cohen shared: He liked ideas and visions that were shared. He questioned where do we go to get the ball rolling since the grant is at least a year away.

### **2. Discussion with Frank Mahady of FXM Associates, regarding proposal cost for Hanson Economic Development Plan Update.**

Mr. Mahady shared: Thank you for giving us the opportunity to revisit the proposal and I understand that there was a bit of a sticker shock which can be understandable. In order to move forward with what you would like updated, I think we should have a discussion as to where you are in implementing the old report. What was liked and disliked? Where do you want to see the emphasis applied to the updated report? Where do you want to go with this?

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett shared: That original report was developed right before COVID and now there are so many changes within the community. More people work from home, the

commute is now different, even jobs have changed since then. Her primary focus is who are we going to pitch the town to in regards to businesses moving into Hanson. What is our value and what can the town offer them to come here? We may need some demographic information to freshen up. Have any of the changes made in town since COVID made our town more attractive for businesses to locate in Hanson?

Mr. Mahady shared: The important part of the report is what you can pitch to investors to come to Hanson to invest or develop in. They want to be welcomed in the community.

Mr. DeFrias stated: We have around \$10,000.00 to devote to the new report. There is a real need to focus on market conditions and trends.

Mr. Mahady explained: We can look at the market conditions and trends comparisons between 2020-2024 and the projected office and industrial retail space.

Mr. DeFrias asked: Could we have a proposal for \$10,000.00 for those two specific areas?

### **3. Discuss Economic Development Committee Draft Outline**

Mr. DeFrias shared: I asked Kim to assist and begin to develop a business outline for the Committee. Take it home and have a look at it. We can regroup at the next meeting and discuss it further.

Ms. Cunningham shared: Look at this as rough draft outline of things to do and accomplish. It is completely flexible.

### **4. FY 2024 One Stop Grant Program Awards.**

Mr. DeFrias shared: I applied for five grants under the FY 2024, the town received three. Total grant money received was **\$273,576.00**.

- \$100,000.00 for Hawks Avenue from Brownfield Redevelopment Fund for site assessment
- \$74,750.00 Community Planning Grant for the creation of the starter home district
- \$98,826.00 for the Site Readiness Plan to support the redevelopment on West Washington Street.

The town of Hanson has received a total of **\$273,576** in grant funding under this program for the 2024 fiscal year. Hanson has received a total of **\$462,866** in grant monies over the past two fiscal years from various agencies through the Planning Department.

Chairperson Fitzgerald Kemmett stated: Great work Tony.

Mr. DeFrias continued: I would like to see if we could work with Hubble to see if the town could pursue to purchase the 40ft strip so that Hawks Avenue could be extended across our frontage. I pursued another grant for the creation of housing at the LZ Thomas building for up to \$100,000.

## II. Board Business

### 1. UPDATE – ZOOM Meeting with Whitman-Hanson Cable Access

*Earlier in the day the Committee met with Rob Gullicksen from WHCA to discuss the next steps needed to create the public service announcements for the Economic Development Committee to share with the community. It was determined to keep the first segment from 3-5 minutes and to take place at the Town Hall.*

The first segment will share four key points regarding the Economic Development Committee

- Introduce the Committee members
- Explain the Business Guide that's been created to assist local business owners
- How grants are beneficial to our community and how they are utilized within the town
- Call to action to reach out to the local businesses

#### ACTION ITEM:

- Reach out to Rob to see if he is available to meet with the Committee November 29<sup>th</sup> between 4-6pm or November 30<sup>th</sup> 4:30-6pm.
- Send Rob details in regards to the Economic Business Committee's business guide

### 2. UPDATE – South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Mr. DeFrias shared: Kim reached out to several Chamber of Commerce in the area. South Shore Chamber was the biggest help, they came back with an email thread saying that they are willing to assist our Committee and get others involved that can provide support or information to the Committee. They are willing to meet with our Committee to us help grown and become more defined. We should arrange for them to meet with us for our first 2024 meeting, I will reach out to see on their availability.

## III. Next Meeting

Next Economic Development Committee meeting is scheduled for January 10th, 2024, at 7pm.

## IV. Adjournment

**MOTION** was made by Mr. Cohen to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Ernest. **Voted 3-0-0.**

The Economic Development Committee Meeting was adjourned at 8:40p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kimberly Cunningham*

Administrative Assistant  
Town of Hanson, Massachusetts



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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING ITEM LIST 11-08-2023**

**Item #1** – Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes from 10-11-23

**Item #2**– Economic Development Committee Business Outline

**Item #3**– Community One Stop Grants letter

