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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023 @ 7:00 PM  
Medford Town Hall Community Room**

### **ROLL CALL:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

Present: Sarah Cooper, Michelle Voorhees, Avril Dickerson, Dave Miller, Brian Seltzer, Mike Pagnotta, Mike Baublitz, Beth Portocalis and Councilwoman Donna Symons-Council Rep.

Absent: None

Guests: David DePetris-Guest Speaker, Mike Czyzk and Bethany Milk

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Oct 11, 2023 meeting. Avril Dickerson made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Dave Miller. Unanimously approved.

### **NEW BUSINESS / ON-GOING PROJECTS**

Guest Speaker: David DePetris – Owner – Village at Taunton Forge Shopping Ctr.

- i. Captain Chucky's Now Open – Crab Cakes & other to go prepared foods.
- ii. Brain Freeze Ice Cream – signed a lease as is making store improvements in Building #4
- iii. Fond Memories closed after 33 years due to the owner's retirement – the space is currently vacant
- iv. Medford Hardware & Card Store to close soon also due to owner's retirement. They also had a rental business. The DePetris family is negotiating with a Retail/Service business to take over that space. Proposed tenant may require variances. Beth noted the Council was previously very responsive to the new Fitness Center which also required Redevelopment Area zoning changes. .
- v. **CONFIDENTIAL: A letter of intent has been signed with a Grocery Store; and received corporate approval. Lease done.**
- vi. Possible activity on the vacant bank.
- vii. Restaurants are doing well.

- viii. The DePetris' own Legend Properties, which is their brokerage side of their business. Feedback from ICS shows – convenience is priority. Gas, Fast Food, etc.
  - ix. Taunton and Tuckerton – What can be done with the 2 bldgs? (Vacant PNC Bank & Vacant Hardware Store) Has overlay zoning. Council and redevelopment committee has say vs zoning due to redevelopment zone. Then planning board for site plan approvals. Mr. DePetris explained the hardships in finding suitable tenants for these spaces.
  - x. Mr. DePetris stated that Zoning changes would benefit the changing needs of Medford residents.
  - xi. Thoughts & Opinions: Where is Medford going is next steps. Needs to be addressed. Example: owners not putting money into their buildings. Stokes Road seems to have a lack of new development or reinvestments in existing commercial buildings. EDC is the group that came to the DePetris family to discuss reduction of buffer. Medford should consider looking at low-lying timber as much has changed over 40 years. Controlled burn has helped previously and maintenance should be considered. Is the condition of some building here in Medford a good thing?? What is the future? Proactive. Encourage EDC to look at redevelopment and consider some buildings. Look at things differently than the past. Example: Is McDonalds a detriment to Medford. Town uses greatly now but was against originally. Consider drive-thru. Uses that allow for development. If traffic now goes to Route 70, did we really solve the problem for downtown Medford – the neighborhoods. Medford is special in the way they blend residential and commercial. Let's keep Medford special. Options within the community. Can't shop local if everyone is pushed to Route 70.
- b. Discussion of visibility of signs and business ensued. Example: Ironstone. Currently there is not a lot, but there is a masterplan for township to increase codes. Goal of completion: late 2024
  - c. Discussion of business for updates to the spreadsheets.

II. Local Business (spreadsheet of available commercial properties)

Sarah Cooper will send the file and work with Beth Portacalis to make spreadsheet available to all. Updates are currently over-writing each other.

III. Feedback received back from Surveys & business visits:

- a. Mike Pagnotta now has his surveys and will hand out.

IV. Main Street Business Directory

- a. Reviewed tonight. During October meeting: Councilman Rebstock suggested a QR code could be easily done, but would the EDC take the lead to develop and maintain the list of businesses? The question arose if the list would be all inclusive (inc. professional offices) or just retail shops, eateries, and breweries? Majority in favor of all businesses. Suggestions made for a kiosk for with the QR code and an easy map of Main Street (akin to food truck night map)
  - i. Additional discussions about placement of the Twp. website; and printing of business cards to include the QR Code, purchased by the Twp. to be placed at each business.
  - ii. Done prior to Holidays??? Beth Portacalis will speak to Kathy Burger and then bring the concept plan to Council for their concurrence & feedback. Write up to be given to Kathy Burger by Michelle Voorhees by next week.

- V. Miscellaneous - None
- VI. Update on “Opening A Business in Medford” Brochure - All  
This is on hold till 2024
- VII. Other Business – December Meeting
  - a. Agred to hold December meeting as scheduled on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

8:38pm Michelle Voorhees proposed to adjourn the meeting. Dave Miller seconded.  
Unanimously approved.

**\*\*NEXT MEETING – WEDNESDAY, December 6 @ 7:00 pm**