



LANCASTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Of Thursday, December 2, 2021

Meeting called to order at 7:01

Roll call taken. Present: Phil Eugene, Joe D'Eramo, George Frantz, Rebecca Young Jones, Lenay Yorko.

Phil read guidelines for meeting.

No minutes were available for approval. Need to catch up to be in compliance with Open Meeting guidelines.

Discussion items are shown on list in "Meeting Materials" on website.

Compiling list of major development areas. This list will be an ongoing outline of the committee's work, with a member assigned to each item.

1. North Lancaster, Capital Group. Phil is contact.
2. GFI Property.
696 Fort Pond Road. Phil is contact. Will go before Planning Board this month, need date.
3. AUC Sale.
Not sure how this impacts Economic Development, but for informational purposes would like update. Lenay will contact AUC to find out status of sale.
4. In Lunenburg, 350,000 sq. ft. warehouse on Keating property with 400+ truck trips daily. Important for Fort Pond area residents to understand. EDC should follow Lunenburg Planning Board minutes, maybe ask developer to come in for a presentation. Becca will be assigned to this item.
5. Orlando put "One North Central" study on website: not sure of source of this study. George volunteered to go through this document.
6. Possible regional traffic study (Phil).
7. DCAMM (Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance) (Old Girls' School at Five Corners). The State is asking Lancaster to take over and develop this property. Details

are still to be worked through. Joe volunteered to get with Select Board member Alix Turner to learn more.

8. Anne Ogilvie, resident suggested adding Unified Packaging expansion, 530 Fort Pond Road, currently before Conservation Commission. This would double the size of the existing building.
9. Resident Christian suggested adding the new marijuana facility in Shirley to the list. May have traffic impact on Lancaster. Both selling and growing. George would like to know what the tax revenue is projected for Shirley.
10. Greg asked if anyone has heard anything about the former Boy Scout property turning into a car dealership.
11. Resident Rob Zidek, 103 Kaleva would like to know if someone could call PJ Keating and Powell Sand and Gravel to find out future plans, especially re. traffic.

Anne Ogilvie would like regional traffic study done as soon as possible. She would also like committees to try not to book the same nights when discussing similar topics, especially important for residents to stay informed when minutes may not be current. Anne showed pictures of a recent crash at Route 70 and Fort Pond Road to illustrate the backups that are created.

Lenay would like to know if there is a monthly meeting of area Economic Development Committees. She will reach out.

Kristen Hera, 165 Grant Way, teacher at Nashoba High School, talked about problems she faces when there is a backup on Route 2, then the backup extends onto Route 70, sometimes up to an hour. Often causes issues with busses getting kids to school late.

John Lewis sent note today. States development land is being grabbed by a few big projects, limiting diversity of other small businesses. Thinks passive solar is a waste of land. Traffic issues are regional, and we need have our legislators involved. Questioned why we are not using some of the Devens property along Route 70.

Phil noted that one of the advantages for North Lancaster might be if the 40R development goes through, there will be an opportunity for small businesses.

Dennis, Grant Way. States that all the trucks that will be coming and going with the new development will need to get gas; only one gas station will cause additional backups.

Rob Zidek questioned whether there has been thought given to what will happen if zoning changes do not go through.

Resident Martha Moore stated that we should be developing to the standards of the Master Plan, and that if we lose the Capital Group opportunity we might find an even better opportunity.

Resident Kristen Saunders asked how quickly a regional traffic study could be done, and even if it is done, what actions could result from this. Phil will contact DOT (Department of Transportation) and Vanasse, Assoc. to get more information on a regional traffic study. He suggested that one way to alleviate some traffic might be to ask developers to stagger shifts.

George noted that there is an upcoming meeting hosted by The Capital Group regarding traffic, and that per MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission) report, 24/7 operations cause less traffic impact.

Resident Greg Klouda noted for perspective that the GFI Warehouse planned would be larger than Whitney Field Mall.

Phil noted that when studies are done, developers have to fund the peer review, and that with any piece of real estate there are restrictions and conditions, there is MEPA (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act) oversight, there are also public hearings and Planning Board procedures.

Resident Robert Cloutier spoke about by-right development, stating that developers have a number of tools they can use such as variances, citing as an example that GFI will be looking for a variance for roof height. Phil replied yes, but variances have to be approved.

Resident John Lewis expressed concern over what happens if the warehouses built are empty in two years.

Becca stated that it is important to remember that Capital Group owns their land and can develop, agreeing that a regional traffic study needs to be done as soon as possible, and that Lancaster cannot solve traffic issues alone. She asks that this committee communicate to the Select Board that live meetings should be via Zoom due to COVID. Phil has communicated this. Also, Becca noted concerns about heavy truck traffic wearing road surfaces and asked if it is possible to assess a road use fee.

Lenay asked what we have done toward the Master Plan written in 2009 and noted that the Town needs revenue.

Resident Karen Cavaoli stated that there is nothing in the Town's bylaws about hours or days but that they do say that you should not be able to hear a business 200' away. She thinks that living within a half mile of many of these developments will be very noisy.

Kristen Hera raised the issue of the massive footprint and stated that she believes that tenants will not want to come if traffic is badly congested.

Joe D'Eramo stated that several people have talked about regional work, asking how this could be done. MRPC? DOT?? Phil will explore.

Dennis asked how we get a holistic, non-biased, economic assessment on all the programs planned for Lancaster, stating that before we allow variances we need a true understanding of cost. Phil replied that of the three developments, Rockport, GFI, and Capital Group, the only ones with a

negative fiscal impact are the ones with housing, due to school costs.

George feels the EDC has a need and a responsibility to make a report to the Select Board; that it's great to be a sounding board, but as a group we should make recommendations, perhaps twice a year. He mentioned that ten years ago the Town turned down a Super Walmart development which ended up being right over the town line, so that Lancaster got the traffic but not the revenue.

Greg thanked the EDC for the meeting. He would like to ask the developers to produce reports early, especially where there will be problems with variances. Phil says he can ask, that this could be asked (noise study, traffic impact study) at the public hearing that the Planning Board will have.

Becca moved to adjourn; George seconded. Phil Eugene, Aye; Joe D'Eramo, Aye; George Frantz, Aye; Rebecca Young Jones, Aye; Lenay Yorko, Aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:01pm.

Next meeting scheduled for December 29, 2001 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Doiron

Phil Eugene, Chair
Approved and accepted: