



LANCASTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (EDC)
Meeting Minutes
Of Wednesday, October 20, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm.

Available by Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82796205410?pwd=RFIZOHBGONQZXhXdU15c0FZb095dz09>

Meeting ID: 827 9620 5410

Passcode: 244556

See Meeting Material Directory on the Economic Development Web Page, Oct 20 meeting folder:

RKG_2021-09-20_Lancaster MA FIA Report.pdf (Phil noted this might be slightly out of date, but as soon as he gets a copy of tonight's report he will post it)

Phil read guidelines for meeting and said that the meeting was being recorded.

Roll call taken. Present: George Frantz, Phil Eugene, Joe D'Eramo, Rebecca Young Jones, Lenay Yorke, Roy Mirabito. Glenn Fratto not present (note that Glenn joined later, was present at adjournment).

II. REVIEW MINUTES – NONE

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Presentation of the RKG Fiscal Impact Report for the Capital Group North Lancaster development. Eric Halvorsen from RKG will give the presentation with Lawrence Kramer from RKG. Eric said this is based on a draft; they received the latest site plan last week and will be updating their report.

IV. DISCUSSION BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, AND
V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rebecca asked about school costs. The RKG study was based on \$10K per student although the actual number is more like \$16K. Eric explained how this would change the Net Fiscal

Impact Results. She asked if RKG made any assumptions around DPW costs. Eric explained that they spoke with Kevin Bartlett, who did not estimate any additional direct cost, although RKG built some into the calculations.

Lenay asked who owns the trailers that would be in the parking spaces, and if they might be additional income. RKG said that they don't know ownership, but if additional vehicles were registered in the Town there would be additional income from excise taxes.

George noted that some student costs, for students going to Minuteman, is over \$40K per student and asked if this was calculated in. He was shocked that DPW said they don't anticipate more road maintenance cost. RKG asked what percentage of children that live in Lancaster go to Minuteman; someone answered that it's 57 students. Phil said he would take the DPW question off line to ask the DPW.

Victoria Petracca (Lancaster Affordable Housing Trust, LAHT) told RKG that the 40R would include 25 affordable units. She asked if they had included the mixed-component of the Lancaster 40R with retail and restaurant usage as well as housing. RKG explained they did include this in estimates of property taxes that might contribute. They also considered that the retail might be up to 200 jobs which would contribute to the local economy. She asked if RKG will be modeling an alternative solution from Capital Group which includes a 40B, posted on the LAHT website this morning. RKG would have to talk to Phil and the Town to see if they want to do that; it's not in their current scope of work.

Much conversation revolved around per student costs and which figure to use; again, the slide show was the revised analysis. The number of affordable units was also discussed. The paper copy that many attendees were looking at is dated and will be redistributed.

Greg Jackson expressed concern about permitting costs and excise tax showing as revenue, because both of these are levied in exchange for services that the Town is providing. He was disappointed in the municipal services costs because there was little to no response from department heads. Again, RKG explained that their assumptions for affordable housing was based on 20% but this was corrected by Victoria.

Lois Wortley would like the EDC to look at the impact of commuters coming to work at the development from other towns and wear and tear that this will cause.

Kathy Hughes is concerned that the developer will sell the project and that the new owner will be looking for a TIF. She also thinks that North Lancaster properties will drop significantly in value and wants to know if this loss in property taxes has been factored in. RKG says that yes, some future owner could appeal to the Assessors for re-evaluation, but that is up to the Town. Re. property taxes, RKG said this would be speculative; they haven't seen this to be true in other towns they've worked with.

Tim Beaumeister, Turner Lane, said that Target has used questionable tax evasion strategies elsewhere in the country, and this would significantly change the cost-benefit analysis. He asked RKG to comment on this risk. RKG says difficult to comment because he hasn't seen

this, but if value was done on just the shell of the building rather than an occupied building, yes, there could be a difference in valuation.

Joe asked if there's lots of congestion, for example it becomes difficult for residents of North Lancaster to get to the center of Lancaster, does this impact property values? RKG says no, they have not seen this.

Rob Zidek, 103 Kaleva Road, says "it seems imprudent to review cost benefit metrics when so many of the investment costs, projected costs, at-risk costs, have yet to be included in this report." He talked about traffic concerns, and the related costs of mitigation and safety. He expressed concern that the Traffic Study presented last week only goes out seven years, and went on to list what needs to be done to the Traffic Study.

Ann Ogilvie hopes that the public can view the final report. Wants to know if tax revenues from JB Hunt and the sand & gravel operation that will be leaving town have been calculated in the report. Phil noted that the current taxes on the sand pit are taxed as open land. RKG explained that in the report it classifies three parcels as "Lost" and this would include these properties and will clarify the JB Hunt property status. She echoed other previous comments that town department heads need to be involved in estimating financial impacts, including the new School District Superintendent, asking the EDC to address this. She asked for more clarification on numbers used in the school impact area of the report. She asked for more clarification on municipal services costs. RKG explained that in Lancaster about 88% is residential and 12% is non-residential. He went on to explain their methodology.

Dick Trussell questioned cost per unit. He also referenced similar developments in Northborough, stating that property values have generally not been impacted.

George asked that the 40B financial impact be calculated in the final report, because it will be essential to residents in making a final judgment. Phil will see what he can do about getting it funded.

Ann asked what happens next. She wants to know how the EDC plans to address resident feedback, and how will VANASSE and RKG respond to residents. Phil said there will be a letter drafted about traffic that will go to Capital Group and the Select Board so they're aware of issues going forward. He will try to figure out how to get funding for the 40B analysis. EDC needs to compile a list of questions and figure out how to get them answered.

Victoria stated that the 40B plans are on the LAHT website, as well as correspondence and a PowerPoint presentation re. the 40B.

Lenay asked residents citing studies or presentations to provide them to the EDC, so that sources can be vetted and information used as needed.

Roy understands that VANASSE sent their report to Capital Group and that they are waiting for a response. Phil said this is true, and that they have to include another traffic study with

their MEPA filing. Ann says it is still not clear what the process is to respond to resident's concerns. Phil said that when VANASSE sends their report to Capital Group, Capital Group will need to do a new traffic study, and then Lancaster will need to do another peer review. He said that hopefully when they do the new study they will address all these questions.

Roy asked when the forums were scheduled. The Select Board will be meeting with the Capital Group on the 26th but that is not one of the forums. Alix Turner did not know when the forums will be scheduled.

Rob Zidek wanted to know if we are going to update the RKG report to include the 40B, shouldn't we also update the Traffic Study. Phil will raise this question. Carol Jackson thinks that if the study is updated that it should include the maximum number of units allowed. Victoria notes that not just the residential section needs to be updated, but the industrial section does as well. Victoria explained that Lancaster is in a category of towns in Massachusetts where a 40B is capped at 200 units, however, what Capital Group is showing is actually three 40Bs, and they are for sale. She noted that they could also sell a parcel, or they could phase them. Different scenarios could mean that Lancaster does or does not go into Safe Harbor.

Greg Jackson was surprised that a developer could divide land on the same property to become three 40Bs. He would like clarification. Phil suggested this was more of a Planning Board issue, and outside the scope of this meeting.

Dick Trussell said that even if 590 units were filled it still doesn't bring Lancaster to 10.1% affordable, so the Town might still be open to another 40B development.

Rebecca asked if there was a way to check out whether or not Target could evade taxes by claiming that the buildings aren't populated. Phil suggested this is a question for the Assessors' office. She will go to Assessors' office to explore this.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Phil announced that on the EDC webpage, there's a document called One North Central and advised people to take a look.

Rebecca moved to adjourn; George seconded. George, Aye; Roy, Aye; Joe, Aye; Rebecca, Aye; Glenn, Aye; Lenay, Aye; Phil Aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Doiron

Phil Eugene, Chair
Approved and accepted: