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Candace Havens
Director
Planning & Development

Amanda Stout
Senior Economic
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Commissioners

Christopher Steele, Chair
Ronald Lipof, Vice Chair
Jack Leader, Secretary

Barry Abramson
David Abromowitz
Daphne Collins
Charles Eisenberg
Robert Gifford
Jane Ives
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CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Economic Development Commission

MEETING MINUTES

May 8, 2012

Commissioners: Chris Steele (Chair), Jack Leader (Secretary), Barry Abramson, Daphne Collins, Chuck Eisenberg, Jane Ives, Peter Lew, Philip Plottel, Darryl Settles

Staff: Candace Havens, Amanda Stout

Guests: Ald. Vicki Danberg, Bill Renke, John Sisson

Absent: Ron Lipof (Vice Chair), David Abromowitz, Robert Gifford, John Pears,

1. EDC Business

- **Motion to approve March minutes. (Leader, seconded by Ives, 6-0-1).**

2. Small Business Incubator

- Subcommittee members attended the final presentation at Suffolk Law School on April 25. The Law and Business students gave the EDC a copy of their final report and final presentation, both of which have been distributed to EDC members and will be posted on the City website. Stout delivered an abbreviated version of the students' presentation, noting that the students' came to the conclusion that an incubator in Newton should be directly or indirectly affiliated with a local university and located near a T station. There was some discussion and clarification, and commissioners questioned the start-up funding and space needs assumptions made in the report. Going forward, commissioners particularly want to think more about a possible focus for an incubator – whether it might be based on existing strengths in the community, focus on growing new sectors, open to all, focus on individual entrepreneurs, or serve as an accelerator to growing businesses. The EDC plans to continue this conversation at the June meeting.

3. Existing Business Support Subcommittee

A. Bank Moratorium and Village Overlay Parking – The EDC had previously approved, written, and sent a letter dated February 29, 2012 to the Board of Aldermen proposing a one-year moratorium on new banks located on the ground floor without a special permit. Commissioners questioned the appropriate next step to docket the item. Candace Havens noted that the EDC could docket the item or ask an Alderman to do so. She suggested that the best way for the EDC to help is to be present at Zoning and Planning Committee (ZAP) discussions over the next few months and to weigh in on policies and plans for parking management. She said that ZAP would soon be discussing rezoning of the Austin Street lot as a new mixed-use village center base zone. Ald. Danberg joined the meeting and offered to follow-up with Steele and docket the Moratorium item. Lew moved to advance the letter drafted by Steele regarding village overlay zoning and parking policy, noting it is an extension of the thinking that was behind the EDC bank moratorium letter and creating a regulatory environment that is supportive of the types of uses that many want to see in the village centers. **Motion to approve Steele's draft letter, with**

revisions as discussed, and send to Aids. Johnson, Hess-Mahan, Danberg, and Fischman (Lew, seconded by Eisenberg, 9-0). Abramson questioned whether such village overlays or boundaries exist for Newton's villages, and Ald. Danberg said that such parameters have been created for Newton Centre, West Newton, and Newtonville.

- **Update: Item docketed to ZAP. #162-12: THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION requesting a one-year moratorium, starting immediately, where no bank shall be allowed to be built or opened for business on the ground floor of any building in any Business District within the city unless granted a Special Permit from the Board of Aldermen. [05-17-12 @ 4:18 PM]**
- **Update: Village Overlay letter sent May 18, 2012.**

B. Small Business Awards – Steele reported that Mayor Warren sees promotion and outreach as two extremely significant roles for the EDC. Collins has continued to work on ideas for a Small Business Awards program, which would be a forum to promote and recognize businesses in Newton. Collins distributed some notes on categories for the awards. Further details will be discussed at the subcommittee meeting this month.

4. Business Attraction Subcommittee

- A. EDSAT and Strategy** – Stout reported that she had seen a final draft of the City's Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) from the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University. Steele suggested that the final EDSAT report should be considered a process document, along with a MassEcon Regional Targeting study (which Steele recently distributed via email) and lead to a longer, thoughtful discussion of how the City wants to focus and target business sectors.
- B. Bio Ready** – Steele and Plottel have been exploring what steps are necessary to raise Newton from the current Bronze level to higher levels in the Massachusetts BioReady Communities program. Higher levels (Silver, Gold, and Platinum) are tied to zoning changes, such as allowing recombinant DNA research and manufacturing by-right in some areas, and marketing incentives. Currently such lab space is only allowed by special permit in Newton, and Plottel noted that biotech processes have changed in the decades since this zoning language was approved. Plotell noted that Ald. Brian Yates has expressed interest in this item and that the EDC will ask if he is interested in docketing the item. ***Motion for Steele and Plottel to work with City staff to docket an item to ZAP that would enable Newton to improve its BioReady status (Collins, seconded by Steele, 8-0).***

5. Old Business and Project Updates

A. Subcommittee meetings

- **Existing Business Support Subcommittee** will meet on Wednesday, May 30th from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. to discuss the Small Business Awards
- **Business Attraction Subcommittee** will meet on Wednesday, May 30th from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. to discuss BioReady status.

B. Riverside – Havens updated the Commission on the progress of the Riverside discussions. On April 17th, the zoning text was created for a Mixed-Use 3/Transit-Oriented District. The Conceptual Plan Review public meeting will be held in June, and then zoning review will be conducted by staff this summer. It is anticipated that the project will apply for a Special Permit with the Land Use Committee in the fall. She confirmed that the upper limit on the amount of development on the site had been set, but that there is a 10% flexibility between uses. The EDC is invited to attend the Conceptual Plan Review public meeting and submit comments, as well as to participate in the special permit process and to invite the developer to present to the EDC in the fall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout, AICP, Senior Economic Development Planner