Topsfield Town Seal in Color

ECDC COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING

Minutes of Monday, November 13, 2023

6:30 PM

Committee Members participating were Chair Lynne Bermudez and members Tom Capano, Sarah Guido, Alex Qirjazi, Rosalee Discipio, Zillie Bhuju and Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian. Dick Gandt and BCTV were also in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bermudez called the meeting to order at 6:43PM.

**GOVERNOR’S ORDER**

Chair Bermudez read the following announcement:

“Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference (see log-in information on the agenda on the website.) No in-person attendance of members of the public will be available, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.”

**ELECTON OF OFFICERS**

After a brief discussion, Kevin Harutunian made a motion to appoint Lynne Bermudez as Chair of the ECDC for FY2025, ending June 30, 2024. Sarah Guido seconded the motion and it passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez Abstain

Zillie Bhuju Aye

Tom Capano Aye

Rosalee Discipio Aye

Sarah Guido Aye

Kevin Harutunian Aye

Alex Qirjazi Aye

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER**

Chair Bermudez shared that the Select Board had recently appointed Leslie Voss, owner of Francie’s Boutique in the Shopping Village, as a member of the ECDC. Leslie was not able to attend tonight’s meeting as she had a prior commitment as a vendor at a Greater Beverly Chamber of Commerce Event (Sip and Shop).  Chair Bermudez welcomed Leslie to the committee.

**2024 MEETING SCHEDULE – Discussion/Vote**

The committee held a discussion on possible days and times for meetings in 2024. It was confirmed that meetings can continue to be held via zoom throughout 2024. Chair Bermudez made a motion to schedule ECDC meetings for 1/29/24, 3/4/24 and 4/22/24 at 5:30 pm to be held via zoom. Tom Capano seconded the motion which carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez Aye

Zillie Bhuju Aye

Tom Capano Aye

Rosalee Discipio Aye

Sarah Guido Aye

Kevin Harutunian Aye

Alex Qirjazi Aye

**DOWNTOWN INITIATIVES UPDATE**

Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian provided the committee with an update on revitalization activities. Topics included the following:

* + The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the sale of the Old Highway Garage went out in mid October. Responses are due back December 7th. Kevin will notify Chair Bermudez if responses are received so that ECDC members can opt to be present for the opening of the bids. Discussion was held on whether multiple business owners could utilize the space at the garage (each in a separate bay) and possible leasing options until the building is sold.
  + The latest in a series of block parties were successfully held with food, drinks and music hosted by Masconomet Sports Foundation, a new non-profit formed to support Masconomet athletics.
  + A meeting was held to review the most current design of the new pocket park to be located at the entrance to the Shopping Village. Residents (several with design experience), business owners and town hall employees were present. The discussion included ensuring safety for the new entrance/exit (installation of bollards was discussed as well as policing to ensure no cars park along the side of the entrance/exit); modifying the brick circle to have some straight lines to give it a less formal look; changing the fieldstone walls to granite slabs; evaluating other options (such as sandstone) to use in place of grass (there were water usage concerns since residents will most likely have outdoor water bans in the summer); changing the open square meeting area in the back to one with wandering paths to be more reflective with greenery and plants; upgrading the bed in front of THOP and the grass to the side of the THOP building to blend with the landscaping design of the park; and the design of the new sign.

Sarah Guido raised the question of whether Gil’s Grocery would be listed on the new sign (as Gil’s is a separate property from the Shopping Village). Kevin will raise that question with Mr. Flomp. Kevin stated the lease is undergoing some revisions to incorporate components such as access to the new municipal parking lots over Mr. Flomp’s property and an easement for access to the main parking lot over land that will be leased by the town. The objective is to have the park finished by the summer of 2024. Kevin will email Chair Bermudez the revised park design when he receives it and she will forward the design to ECDC members for review and input. Another open meeting will be held to review the revised design. Discussion was also held on various ways for ECDC members to support bringing a restaurant to the downtown.

* + Preparation for the Holiday on the Green continues. The skating rink has been set up on the Common; the tree lights will have timers this year; and the artisan village, usually in the Public Hall, will be expanded to be a path of shops throughout the Town Hall and the Newburyport Chamber of Commerce will host a Sip and Shop event with wine and beer.

* + The Pump Track is 90% finished and will open in the Spring of 2024. As a tie in, Kevin is talking with Beverly Grand Prix organizers to bring one of their bicycle race events to Topsfield next summer. The existing Grand Prix races include a child parade, 6-8 amateur race events and semi-professional races. The proposed circular route in Topsfield would start at the Shopping Village (where the pocket park will be), then turn right onto Main St., right onto Grove St., right onto Washington St, right onto W. Common St. and then right back onto Main St.

**ADJOURN**

At 8:04 PM, Rosalee DiScipio made a motion to adjourn. Sarah Guido seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez Aye

Zillie Bhuju Aye

Tom Capano Aye

Rosalee Discipio Aye

Sarah Guido Aye

Kevin Harutunian Aye

Alex Qirjazi Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Bermudez - Chair

**DOCUMENTS**

1. Agenda

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.