



ECDC COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING

**Minutes of Monday, June 13, 2022
6:30 PM**

Committee Members participating were Chair Lynne Bermudez and members Tom Capano, Sarah Guido, Janet Kmetz, Zillie Bhuju (joined at 7:35), and Kevin Harutunian (Town Administrator). Planning Board Chair Martha Morrison and Select Board member Dick Gandt were also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bermudez called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

GOVERNOR'S ORDER

Chair Bermudez announced that, due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency announced by Governor Baker, this meeting would be conducted as a Virtual Meeting via ZOOM and as such, participation was remote. She then read the following:

"Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, 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 permitted, 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."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Janet Kmetz made a motion to approve the minutes of the ECDC meeting held Monday, April 11, 2022. Tom Capano seconded the motion and it passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez – Aye
Zillie Bhuju – Aye

Tom Capano– Aye
Sarah Guido – Aye
Kevin Harutunian – Aye

DOWNTOWN INITIATIVES UPDATE

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

- The RFP for the Old Highway Garage is in process. The Town is looking for technical assistance developing the RFP as various environmental, engineering and conservation issues are involved. Expected due date for release of the RFP is 30-60 days.
- Business Development Showcase on June 7th was very successful with 50 attendees. Attendees included a state delegation, Planning and Select Board members, local business owners and businesses outside the town, real estate agents, land owners looking to commercially develop their property, and Chamber of Commerce members from Newburyport and Beverly. Kevin received six inquiries about developing in Topsfield and will be meeting with these individuals over the next few weeks. Packets of information from the showcase are available for any individual interested in developing in Topsfield. Kevin thanked Zillie Bhuj, Rosalee DiScipio and Alex Qirjazi for participating on the business panel and thanked Sarah Guido and the TCP for their time and financial support.
- A contract was signed with a consulting firm to assist in development of the Master Plan. The Plan is expected to be completed in 16-18 months. A Master Plan Committee charter is being developed and a preliminary list of committee members will be discussed at the 6/15/22 Select Board meeting. A vote on both the charter and members is expected at the Select Board meeting on 6/27/22.
- Three responses were received from the RFP for construction of the wayfinding signage. The first phase will involve roughly 6-7 signs located on Route 1 (northbound by the fair and southbound coming from Ipswich) and Rt 97. These signs are estimated to be installed mid-summer. The second phase will involve construction of the kiosks. A working group will be created to identify information to be contained on the kiosks.
- The new solar bench, which plays music, was installed on Main St. at the Rail Trail. Articles about the solar bench appeared in the Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times.
- Progress is being made on the open positions for Purchasing Agent and Administrative Support for the Planning/Zoning boards and the Conservation Commission.

- The first of four Homegrown Markets will be held on 6-16-22. The market will feature 9-10 vendor tables, and ice cream truck, an acapella group, lights and children's' games. The remaining three markets will be held on the third Thursday of July, August and September and will potentially feature Ipswich Ale and Alfalfa Farms.
- Martha Morrison provided an update on the Tomato Festival to be held on 9/10/22 from 11 am – 3 pm. Several farms have signed up, as well as coordinators for the games and tomato contests. Discussions are underway with the coordinator and judges from last year's Tomato Recipe contests. Vendor trucks for pizza, caprese salad, seafood and ice cream have been arranged, as well as the Fire Department Explorers providing hot dogs. A sound system has also been arranged. Discussions will be held with TCP concerning fundraising for the sound system as well as game and contest prizes. A coordinator for the Scarecrows is next to be addressed.
- The Strawberry Festival, held on 6/11/22, was a big success. A thank you to all volunteers who made the event possible.
- The Topsfield Garden Club and TCP were thanked for the beautiful flowers that hang from the streetlights and are situated in on the ground planters.
- Feedback from the state on town responses to the new MBTA Housing proposal is expected in the Fall.
- It was noted that Zumi's has musicians from out of town performing in front of the shop – bringing in great crowds and business from surrounding towns.

A tentative date for the next ECDC meeting was set for July 18 at 6:30 pm. Lynne will check with Alex Qirjazi and Rosalee DiScipio to confirm if that date works. Kevin will keep the committee updated on whether zoom meetings will be allowed after July 15. While some discussion is underway, to date the Governor has not extended the July 15 date.

ECDC members will email Chair Bermudez to indicate their willingness to continue as members for one more year. The Select Board will appoint ECDC members for fiscal year 2023 at their 6-27-22 meeting.

ADJOURN

At 7:22 PM, Janet Kmetz made a motion to adjourn. Zillie Bhujju seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

Lynne Bermudez - Aye
Zillie Bhujju – Aye
Tom Capano– Aye

Sarah Guido – Aye
Kevin Harutunian – Aye
Janet Kmetz - Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Bermudez - Chair

DOCUMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Draft ECDC minutes of 4/11/2022

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.