



## **ECDC COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Minutes of Monday, September 19, 2022  
6:30 PM**

Committee Members participating were Chair Lynne Bermudez and members Tom Capano, Sarah Guido, Tracey Granlund, Zillie Bhuj, Alex Qirjazi (left meeting at 7:55 PM), and Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian (joined at 6:40 PM). Select Board Chair Marshall Hook, resident Dick Gandt, Burlington Planning Director Kristin Kassner and BCTV were also in attendance.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bermudez called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

### **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."

### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER**

Chair Bermudez introduced and welcomed the newest ECDC member, Tracey Granlund, and reminded members there is still one open seat on the committee if members know of someone who would be interested in joining.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Zillie Bhuju made a motion to approve the minutes of the ECDC meeting held Monday, July 18, 2022. Sarah Guido seconded the motion and it passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Tom Capano	Aye
Sarah Guido	Aye
Zillie Bhuju	Aye
Tom Capano	Aye
Sarah Guido	Aye
Lynne Bermudez	Aye
Alex Qirjazi	Abstain (absent from meeting)
Tracey Granlund	Abstain (new member)

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chair Bermudez provided an overview of the role of Chair and asked if anyone were interested in being considered for the position. As no names were put forward, Zillie Bhuju made a motion to reelect Lynne Bermudez to the position of Chair for FY2023. The motion was seconded by Sarah Guido and the motion passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Tom Capano	Aye
Sarah Guido	Aye
Zillie Bhuju	Aye
Alex Qirjazi	Aye
Tracey Granlund	Aye
Lynne Bermudez	Aye

### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

After discussion was held, Tom Capano made a motion to establish the FY2023 meeting schedule as follows:

October 24, 2022 – 6:30 PM via Zoom  
November 14, 2022 – 6:30 PM via Zoom  
December 12, 2022 – 6:30 PM via Zoom  
January 30, 2023 – 6:00 PM via Zoom  
March 13, 2023 – 6:00 PM via Zoom

Motion was seconded by Zillie Bhuju and the motion passed with a roll call vote as follows:

Tom Capano	Aye
Sarah Guido	Aye
Zillie Bhuj	Aye
Kevin Harutunian	Aye
Alex Qirjazi	Aye
Tracey Granlund	Aye
Lynne Bermudez	Aye

### **DOWNTOWN INITIATIVES UPDATE**

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

- Master Plan Charter/Committee – The Charter was developed and volunteers were appointed by the Select Board. Appointed members, joining Kevin Harutunian - Town Administrator, include Marshall Hook (Select Board), Josh Rownd and Steven Hall (Planning), Andrew Mulholland (Conservation), Bradley Bissell (Sustainability), Gary Bergmann and Tom Rosa (Residents at Large), Rosalee DiScipio (ECDC), Elizabeth Mulholland (Historical/ Agriculture), Gregor Smith (ZBA), and (Chief Jen Collins-Brown (Public Safety). Still to be appointed are a business owner and potentially a second ECDC and Select Board member. The first meeting of the committee will be on 9/26 at 4 pm, preceded by a tour at 1 pm. The Plan will be comprehensive, including 9 major elements, and will be complete within 18 months. This will allow Plan recommendations to go before Town Meeting in May of 2024.
- MBTA Multi-family Housing District – The state heard the concerns of small towns concerning their inability to create 750 new units of housing due to issues such as septic constraints. The state revised its formula so that towns with populations under 7,000 per the 2020 census (such as Topsfield) are currently being asked to build 118 new units of by-right high-density multi-family housing. The identification of this housing district will be incorporated into the Master Plan.
- RFP for the Old Highway Garage – The RFP was finalized with the help of Glen Gibbs, retired Planner from Ipswich, and will be on the street next week. Replies are expected within 1-2 months. The owner of the vacant lot across the street from the garage is interested in selling his property to a potential developer of the Garage, which will provide additional septic opportunity. Previous and current surveys of Topsfield residents have shown an overwhelming preference for a sit-down restaurant or pub in town, so that is

a priority in the RFP. The RFP Selection Committee includes a member of the TCP, Glen Gibbs, Kevin Harutunian, Martha Morrison (Chair – Planning Board) and a member of the community (TBD). After receiving and evaluating RFP responses, this committee will forward their recommendation to the Select Board.

- Emerson Homes 40B – The Town Administrator has held discussions with the Emerson Homes developer, and the developer has held public meetings with residents to ensure the building fits with the character of the neighborhood and is not intrusive. The developer has agreed to increase the number of units from 44 to 50 so that Topsfield can reach the state required percentage of 10% of housing being affordable. This will preclude any other unfriendly 40B developments.
- 57 Perkins Row 40B – The application for a 40B development for this property has been withdrawn.
- Possible development at the corner of Rt 1/97 – Kevin Harutunian introduced Chris Carly who is the owner of the property on the corner of Rt 1 and 97. He is interested in developing a building with a restaurant, 4 condos and a small retail market. As the property is currently Central Residential (which allows residential buildings only), it would need to be rezoned into the Business Highway (BH) District. A second issue is that the property has a little under 30,000 feet, shy of the 40,000 needed in BH to develop a property.
- New Parklet at the entrance to the Village Shopping Center – Kevin has held meetings with the owner of the Center, Mr. Flomp, and discussions are proceeding to develop a parklet at the entrance to the Center. Mr. Flomp is also looking at bringing in pop up shops in his vacant storefronts.
- Wayfinding signage – Three responses were received for construction of the wayfinding signs. The Town has a \$100,000K grant to create the signs. Kevin estimates the monies will cover 6-8 directional signs and one kiosk. The signs are expected to be in the ground before snowfall. Zillie Bhujju offered a suggestion to create a flyer with a QR code that could be inserted into Topsfield Fair pamphlets for next year. The QR code could link to the TCP website.
- Events – Kevin provided an update on events held over the past two months including a very successful Tomato Festival (organized by the Agricultural Commission and funded by the TCP), several well attended concerts, three high traffic Home Grown Markets, and a Movie Night sponsored by the Police. The ice rink will be back up by Thanksgiving (probably not frozen until January's cold weather). Solar music, solar up lighting for trees and tree light decorating competitions are being pursued to brighten and energize the downtown. A winter festival and propane powered fire pits are also being discussed.

- Holiday on the Green – Three co-chairs are leading this year's event and many new ideas are being discussed to build on the success of previous events.
- Pump Park – Kevin provided an update on the new proposed location of the Pump Park (Bare Hill Park on Rt 97 just after the cemetery). Marshall Hook shared that Police Chief Hovey had looked at the entrance/exit of the proposed site and sees no safety issues. Next step for the Playground Committee is to begin fundraising for the required \$60,000. When funding is secured the Committee will ask the Select Board for final permission to use the Town land for the proposed Pump Park.

Tom Capano asked if the flower baskets on the ground throughout the downtown could be removed as they have been severely impacted by the drought. Sarah Guido asked if the Town has contacted Nunan's yet to put in an order for holiday greens for the solar lights. As the Town has not, the Town Administrator asked if Sarah would contact Nunan's. She will call this week.

As enhancement of recreational activities is a goal of the Select Board and a request heard often from residents, the committee agreed to invite Recreation Director, Stephanie Sweeney, to the next ECDC meeting (10/24/22) to discuss programs she and the Town Administrator have been discussing.

### **ADJOURN**

At 8:19 PM, Sarah Guido made a motion to adjourn. Zillie Bhuju seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

Tom Capano	Aye
Sarah Guido	Aye
Zillie Bhuju	Aye
Kevin Harutunian	Aye
Tracey Granlund	Aye
Lynne Bermudez	Aye

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynne Bermudez - Chair

### **DOCUMENTS**

1. Agenda
2. Draft ECDC minutes of 7/18/2022

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.