



ECDC COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING

**Minutes of Tuesday, January 12, 2021
6:30 PM**

Committee Members participating were Chair Lynne Bermudez, and members Zillie Bhujju, Sarah Guido, Janet Kmetz, Rosie Discipio, Alex Qirjazi, and Kevin Harutunian (Town Administrator). Also present was Topsfield Library Director, Laura Zalewski, Select Board member Dick Gandt, Planning Board Chair Martha Morrison and Cultural Council Chair Kathleen Hunt.

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 Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Topsfield Select Board will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Topsfield website at www.topsfield-ma.gov For this meeting, 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 below.) 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."

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bermudez called the meeting to order at 6:32PM and stated that the meeting was being recorded by Boxford Cable for future viewing from the Town website.

Dick Gandt asked to video record the meeting.

Chair Bermudez reviewed proposed revisions to the format of the meetings, which were positively received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Janet Kmetz made a motion to approve the minutes of the ECDC meeting held Tuesday, December 8, 2020 as presented. Zillie Bhujju seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote as follows:

Zillie Bhujju – Aye
Rosalee Discipio – Aye
Sarah Guido – Aye
Kevin Harutunian – Aye
Janet Kmetz - Aye
Alex Qirjazi - Aye
Lynne Bermudez – Aye

Cultural Arts/Events Presentation

Topsfield Library Director, Laura Zalewski, provided the committee with an overview of the mission of the Library as well as current and scheduled art and cultural events/programming based on the library's strategic plan. Laura also reviewed the organizations which are currently collaborating with the Library. It was noted the Friends of the Library also conduct several events each year. Kevin Harutunian shared discussions he and Laura had had with the Montserrat College of Art in Beverly regarding holding an external 3D Art Exhibit at the Library. Janet Kmetz noted, and it was agreed, that a key to the success of all events is promotion to increase attendance. Rosalee DiScipio noted that a Town Facebook page that listed activities and businesses (a sort of Virtual Town Bulletin Board), would help with communication/event promotions. Zillie Bhujju will incorporate the one-page Library summary Laura provided to the committee into the Arts and Cultural Events Inventory Zillie developed last month.

Downtown Initiatives Update – Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator

Kevin Harutunian provided the committee with an update on the following initiatives:

- Economic Development Planner – new position
- Covid Vaccinations – current and possible mega site

- Purchase of Main St. Planters
- Estimated delivery of Solar Streetlights
- Disposition of the old DPW building on School Ave.
- Development of Main St. Streetscapes
- Master Plan - state earmark
- Shared Street Grant – second round
- EV Charging Stations

Discussion was held on the possibility of Topsfield being a mega-site for Phase III Covid vaccinations in April, the grant and timeframe for delivery of the solar streetlights from the Netherlands, and the process and timeframes for disposition of the DPW building.

Community Development Discussion

Due to time constraints, Chair Bermudez suggested, and the committee agreed, to defer discussion of the topic of “New Business Recruitment” to the committee’s February meeting.

Kevin Harutunian provided an overview of the application submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) by Cabot Theater to provide Drive-In Concerts on the grounds of the Topsfield Fair (specifically on the location known as Fairview Farms). As this is a new use for Fairview Farms (the current use is overflow parking for the Fair), the application must go before the ZBA. Cabot introduced similar drive-in concerts in NH last year. Discussion was held on logistics and impacts to the Town. Alex Qirjazi suggested that, if the concerts move forward, signage be considered to direct people into Topsfield’s downtown.

As the budget for next year is currently being developed, the question of possible funding for signage was raised by Janet Kmetz. At this time Kevin Harutunian does not foresee any available funds, although grants can be pursued. Janet Kmetz will contact Kevin to provide him with an update of her investigation into signage and conversations with Essex Heritage.

ADJOURN

At 8:20 PM, Zillie Bhuju made a motion to adjourn. Janet Kmetz seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Lynne Bermudez – Aye
Zillie Bhuju – Aye

Rosalee Discipio – Aye
Sarah Guido – Aye
Kevin Harutunian – Aye
Janet Kmetz - Aye
Alex Qirjazi – Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Bermudez – ECDC Chair

DOCUMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Draft ECDC minutes of 12/8/2021
3. Topsfield Town Library – Mission and Events & Programming

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.