

Economic Development Council Meeting
Minutes: April 26, 2007; 6:00 pm
Fine Arts Work Center

Present:

Members: Chairman Steve Melamed, Alix Ritchie, William Dougal

Staff: Acting Assistant Town Manager/Grant Administrator Michelle Jarusiewicz

CCEDC: David Willard, Dan Dray, Leslie Richardson

Chamber of Commerce: Candace Collins-Bowden

PBG: Steve Tate

Mt. Auburn Associates: Peter Kwass, Michael Kane

PTV

Steve Melamed introductions.

Presentation to Provincetown Business Community of Phase 1 of the Mt. Auburn Associates Economic Study

Phase 2 to capitalize on the opportunities developed from the data collected in Phase 1.

Discussion:

Bill Dougal: One of the fundamental issues to be addressed is the cost of doing business in town. Analysis on a 3 bedroom home costs have risen dramatically over time. Disconnect of the rising cost of real estate and the rising costs of maintaining homes. Time is of the essence.

Elaine Anderson: What is the impact of rentals? Has the analysis focused only on ownership?

Napi Van Derek: Rents have increased so much and now it is not affordable.

Howard Birchman: We live in a world of a global economy. Local changes can be made through the Growth Management By-Laws. Restaurants are very difficult to begin under the current zoning laws.

Correlation of home owners and the age of owners. Confluence of residents, property owning non-resident, tourist population.

Austin Knight: Seasonal workers and seasonal housing issues. Needed for the seasonal businesses.

Rick Murray: Strongly disagree about the stability of the economy. No incentive for businesses to stay open on a year-round basis. Licensing fees are much greater for year-round permits. Workers are difficult to obtain in the off-season. Underground economy of unemployment and payment "under the table". Questioning the number of lodging units. Need to create workforce community housing. Younger people would come if they could come and obtain reasonable rental rates.

Lynn Davies: Need comparison of the costs of doing business. Would like a better understanding of how many of the retail businesses are stable – what is the retention rate of small businesses. Is it statistically valid to have trends developed from such small samples? Would like information on wages over time.

Cost of doing business
Impact of local by-laws
Quantify retail businesses

Capturing discretionary income
Lowering the cost of doing business
Housing issues

Alix Ritchie: In order to try to identify opportunities we would look to comparable communities for lessons learned.

Comparables need to include similar stresses on costs of doing business. Data reflects we are looking at a different customer than we have seen over the last 10 years. We may need to change who we are marketing to in terms of who is our customer now and into the future. Health issues are important to an older and more affluent customer. The customer that the town is marketing to may be different than the customer that we have.

What are comparable communities? Mt. Auburn will be looking at 4 comparable communities. Housing issues are similar.

Cathy Meads: What are some of the growth areas for the town outside of the tourism sector? What other basis for economic growth can be found? How can we get people into town as other than tourists? The school in town can be the base of a year round economic activity. 13th year of school possible to market and draw economic power.

Steve Melamed: EDC has given the school system a year to acclimate with its new administration and will be looking to work with the school in Phase 2.

Bill Dougal: Cost of doing business issue. Businesses are struggling because of the exponential growth of the costs of doing business. Issue of changing demographics and projections for the future.

Steve Tate: PBG is compiling the bi-annual member survey of local business conditions and the business environment. Business is up, but expenses are up even greater therefore profits are down. Stages of retirement where early retirees are coming to town and this could be a potential for future marketing.

Leslie Richardson CCEDC: Survey in the fall.

Brunetta Wolfman: Support for people opening businesses who are doing so “for the romance of it”. What about looking for the National Trust to develop interest?

Bill Glass: Does a community have the capability to shape its trends? What is an appropriate ambition for us to have here in town?

Michael Kane: Example of Burlington VT. Beginning an economic development plan, the implementation and the strategic look at the plan as an iterative process helps to generate success.

Rick Murray: Housing, housing, housing. Families need to be able to afford to live here. Workers need to be able to afford to live here. Businesses need families and workers that are able to afford to live here.

Steve Melamed: The EDC is a relatively new committee and that this will take time to develop.

Brunetta Wolfman: Be sure to take a look at past Economic Development reports as there are many of the same trends.

Lynn Davies: Looking at revitalizing the waterfront and to see if some comparables to develop the waterfront as the commercial fishing has declined. Ex: Rockport.

Burt Wolfman: School committee and PAAM. Need to look at the Cape as a whole and develop that as potential.

Steve Melamed closing comments: welcoming people to join the regular EDC meetings.

Meeting ended at 8:45 pm.