



## Town of Bridgewater Downtown Revitalization Ad Hoc Committee

February 22, 2024  
9:00 AM

### MEETING MINUTES

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Councilor Perry called the meeting to order at 9:26am. The meeting took place in Conference Room 201A and via Zoom.

Councilors Present: Councilor Perry, Councilor Linde and Councilor Murphy.

Also in attendance was CED Director Robert Rulli.

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

a) January 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes

*Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the January 25, 2024 meeting minutes, which was seconded by Councilor Murphy.*

A roll-call vote was taken and the results are recorded as follows: Linde – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passes 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

#### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

a) Discussion of Downtown Revitalization

CED Director Robert Rulli gave an update on the revised zoning amendment of FBC with all comments from committees and Planning board as long as they are legal. Changes are in compliance with MBTA. Executed Purchase and Sale agreement for Friendly site. Going to be groundbreaking in terms of the transformation. Restaurant in bowling alley site, mixed use, 12 to 14 townhouses in the rear. Engineering Firms will begin looking at Central Square. Once Resolution is adopted we will put out an RFP for a firm.

Consultants call tomorrow at 1pm tomorrow with MBTA and what we need to have for work product for next step. Michael and Mr. Rulli will be meeting with Clark and staff in the next couple of weeks

to discuss when train station is no longer there. Possibly parking. Not too early to start having conversation, can look for funding. Putting in a block grant for a façade program in Central Square.

Dr. Perry asked how do other communities do stuff like that? Mr. Rulli noted they go for grants that are up to \$25k to building owners.

Mr. Rulli noted that a grant for water infrastructure because we know it's an issue. Initiated conversations with DOC with wastewater from university. Opening up will be significant.

Dr. Perry asked what the timeframe was. Mr. Rulli noted Corrections is a 5 year process. They are under a consent order from DEP. They have to make improvements to their treatment plant, coming in at a good time. Identifying funding is the next challenge. Regional water study being funded through EPA, do not see anything coming out of that.

Dr. Perry asked how does that effect growth and development. Mr. Rulli noted that it ties in to Vision to Reality, have capacity at waste water treatment plant. Perkins won't break until Fall. Friendly's site has 30 days until close. Campus Plaza and relocation of MBTA is within 5 year period. Should come together. Important we keep our foot on the accelerator. Have internal water strategy committee working on wells on High Street. Vernon Street will require a ton of money. This is not a bad thing, taxes will not go up.

Dr. Perry noted that we need to create revenue streams. Mr. Rulli noted that concerns about traffic is real but those exist today. Looking at what we can do. There is Federal money for us to look at for the project.

Dr. Perry asked does our water/sewer system have the capacity of other projects in town? Mr. Rulli noted that he won't speak for the water department, they will tell you no but that's the wrong answer. We should accelerate a solution. Two new wells on High Street will increase the flow within the next two years. Wastewater is my biggest concern. 96 Main Street is in play right now, two offers, housing as well, town houses for sale not renting. Will be a tear down, will have to go in front of historic.

Mr. Rulli further noted that the D'Angelo site, people are looking at that, closed for lack of help. Small business program continues, 4<sup>th</sup> Coffee Friday hour at the Senior Center. People are supportive. Once a month small business workshops, not as well attended as I would like. Boston Globe is hovering around to see what Bridgewater does in light of what happened in Milton. Change is hard for some people but this is a good thing.

Dr. Perry noted that when presenting this at next meeting, highlight a few of the issues public was concerned with, changes created from Planning Board and others. Mr. Rulli noted that the MBTA communities does not allow units on the ground floor. Lending is difficult right now, requires a lot more equity. Pascal Property is selling for \$2.2M, setting the bar. No lender is lending on commercial or retail, lending on housing. Bluestone and Rockland Trust have expressed interest in funding for development of those sights.

Mr. Rulli noted that Just Desserts average rent is \$8 a foot. That is the only place those types of businesses can survive. Owners not investing in improvement. Continue to do newsletter every

other week, Let's talk, trying to make sure people are getting as much information as possible. We are missing young professionals with kids. Generally the public is supportive we just don't see them at the meeting. Seniors have been the best, acknowledge things need to change.

b) Discussion of Route 18 Corridor Transportation Study Resolution

Dr. Perry noted that this Resolution was written to summarize what has been done and within vision to reality and master plan going forward. Touches on changes looking for. Giving council the mechanism to get the ball rolling.

*Councilor Murphy made a motion to recommend Resolution R-FY24-004, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde*

A roll-call vote was taken and the results are recorded as follows: Linde – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passes 3-0

**ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

*Councilor Linde made a motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.*

A roll-call vote was taken and the results are recorded as follows: Linde – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passes 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28am.

**In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Council assembled voted, at their meeting on April 4, 2024, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.**