



**Town Of Webster** Est. 1832  
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**Economic Development Committee**

**Doug Willardson**  
Webster Town Hall  
350 Main Street  
Webster, MA 01570

Phone (508) 949-3800 x1041  
FAX: (508) 949-3888  
dwillardson@webster-ma.gov

**Economic Development Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes – June 28, 2018**

A meeting of the Economic Development Committee was held in the Community Meeting Room of the Webster Police Department on June 15, 2018. Town Administrator Doug Willardson called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Present from the Committee: Marc Becker, Brian Krestchmann; Town Administrator Doug Willardson (ex officio), Director of Planning and Economic Development Ann Morgan (ex officio) and Director of Community Development / Webster Redevelopment Authority Carol Cyr (ex officio). Also Present: Carole Marchand.

1. Pledge of Allegiance - Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. It was noted that no quorum was present and that the Committee would only review agenda items but take no action.
2. **Select Organization of Committee Membership** – Mr. Willardson reviewed the committee composition requirements set forth in the Committee charge approved by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Becker and Mr. Krestchmann are the only two members whose terms have not expired. Mr. Willardson stated that he would reach out to past members and see if they are still interested in serving. Ms. Morgan noted that Sharon McMahon of the Planning Board had expressed an interest in serving. Other potential members from the business community were identified. Mr. Willardson stated that he would reach out to all potential members.
3. **Review Current Economic Development Efforts** – Tabled.
4. **Brainstorm Current Economic Development Efforts** – Mr. Willardson noted that the Economic Development Fund had been approved by the Board of Selectmen and that one application has been received. He reviewed the criteria for applying – all information can be found in the application packet including eligible projects along with terms and conditions.

One eligible project, a painted mural on the building located at 46 Main Street, is currently underway. Lou Perrin, the property owner, had approved the mural design. Work continues on locating a necessary lift for the artist to reach the proposed location. Mr. Willardson noted that he would bring a sketch of the proposed mural to the next meeting. Mr. Becker provided the name of another Main Street property owner who might have a lift the Town can borrow.

Other efforts include the general cleaning up and maintenance of public spaces in the downtown area. A municipal custodian will be working on weed management and other general upkeep tasks in all the public areas along Main Street. Ms. Cyr noted that the clean-up and ongoing maintenance of public spaces is going a long way to improving the business and resident perception of the downtown. Some of the properties along Main Street have recently sold to new owners and there could be opportunities to work with those parties to effect positive change. Other public events and seasonal decorations along Main Street are being undertaken and managed by Carole Marchand, the Town's Recreation Director. Mapfre, owners of 201 Main Street (the old Woolworth building), will need to demolish that building for public safety reasons. Mapfre is working with the Town to improve parking in the back of their other adjoining building

as well as landscaping the area adjacent to the sidewalk. Ms. Morgan noted that Mapfre had presented their concept to the Planning Board who approved it conditionally as an administrative action. Information about that decision was documented in a memo to the Town Administrator.

5. **Brainstorm Other Economic Development Activities to Pursue** – Mr. Willardson noted that he would like to pursue the development of a site finder on the Town's website to direct people to business and commercial real estate opportunities. Sites listed would include existing business / commercial properties as well as large vacant parcels. The Exit 1 interchange on 395 could have potential for development as well as the old Colonial Club. Mr. Becker listed a few sites that would be appropriate for such a list. Ms. Cyr suggested a site on Juniper Lane.

Ms. Cyr noted that the Webster Dudley Business Association continues to provide programming and networking for the local business community. She noted that the Town could assist in promoting those events through the website once the economic development webpages were fully populated.

Mr. Krestchmann suggested a mentoring program for new businesses to help navigate the various aspects of being a small business owner. He added that permitting can be confusing and that guidance would be helpful not only for the business owner but for building relationships with the Town.

Mr. Willardson noted that he would continue his annual business outreach which includes a letter to all businesses in Town as well as any follow up from inquiries received as a result of that effort.

Mr. Becker suggested that efforts be focused on the gateways to the Town such as at the Dudley / Webster border and the intersection of East Main Street, Thompson Road and Worcester Road. Work items would include cleaning up derelict properties, signage, and planning for infrastructure improvements. He added that efforts should be made to address the various problems with the property owned by New England Ventures at the corner of East Main Street and Thompson Road.

Mr. Willardson reviewed a list of "spotlight" properties that have potential to improve the economic climate and improve the streetscape of various parts of Town including: Jimmy's Convenience Store, Dan Marcou's property, 46 Main Street, Lelanite site which is currently for sale and the vacant lot on South Main Street owned by Chris Robert. That lot has been neglected and is seriously overgrown. Mr. Becker asked the list of properties be distributed to the Committee and that members agree to contact the property owners to open the dialogue and find out what they plan to do.

Other ideas discussed included preparing a visual survey of key commercial / retail areas. Ms. Morgan noted that such a survey would be a key first step towards a Complete Streets application. Other updates included the proposed mini-golf facility at Mohegan Bowl and that the Planning Board is assessing the B5 (business without sewer) properties that now have access to municipal sewer. Mr. Krestchmann suggested that the Committee look at strategic marketing. Ms. Morgan noted that ongoing web content for economic development would support all these efforts.

6. Any other business that may come legally before the Committee – None.
7. **Next Meeting** –Monday, July 23, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the Irene Martel Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall.
8. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Becker, seconded by Mr. Krestchmann. Motion passed unanimously 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.



Doug Willardson, Town Administrator

10/29/18

Date