



EDIC Remote Meeting

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 4:30 pm

Zoom Meeting

- **Call to order of the Board.**
- **Meeting began at 4:36 pm.**
- **Open Meeting Law:** This meeting is recorded by video and audio in accordance with state Open Meeting Law. Consistent with the Governor’s orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation. If you are calling in on a phone you can press Star 9 (*9) to request to speak. If you are watching on a computer or device there is a “raise hand” button that you can tap or press to request to speak. Please use either of these options during oral communications to be recognized to speak.
- **In Attendance:** Acting Chair B. Bramhall, Treasurer R. Pino, M. DiLascio, T. Balf, J. Oppenheim, T. Wood, and T. Hedges. Also in attendance: Felicia Webb, Chief Administrator for Cape Ann Transportation Authority, Attorney John Cunningham, and Sal DiStefano, Director of Economic Development for the City of Gloucester.
- **Meeting minutes from the March 9th, 2021 meeting were approved. All were in favor.**
- **EDIC Logo and File Generation:** Laura Georigades from GL Design will be contacted for a quote on resizing electronic files of the EDIC logo and creating new letterhead template. L. O’Leary will contact the design firm for a quote.
- **Business Park Status:** Currently, Applied Materials now has over 100 jobs available due to many employees taking retirement packages. The manufacturing portion of the business is going at full strength. We are seeing departments like Engineering, Accounting, Purchasing, and Supply Chain Management are still working at a 30% capacity. Most of the employees are still working remotely from home. It looks like the rest of the work force will be returning to the office in September or October latest. Applied has sent out surveys to all employees about working remotely and is trying to get some feedback about returning to the workplace. NOAA is requiring employees to return at the end of the calendar year or the earliest in 2022. NOAA also conducted a survey and eighty percent of the workforce is fine with working remotely

from home and 20% would like to be back in the office. This is following suit and the same holds true in Boston. Companies are not losing productivity with employees working from home.

- **Industrial Park Signage:** T. Hedges is still awaiting pricing for the project. Apparently, Swan Net is leaving Blackburn and has sold their building. T. Hedges is now tweaking the list of target companies that may have interest in participating in on this project. Attorney Cunningham advised the Board that the EDIC will need to send out a Request for Proposal. Donna Compton, Director of Purchasing for the City would be the contact and would provide further instruction on RFP protocol. The Board agreed that the EDIC should remain in charge and manage the project. The legality of the money issue we would need some guidance on from Attorney Cunningham. Currently, there is no one group managing this effort.
- **CATA on Demand:** There has been a lot of progress with CATA On Demand/The Last Mile project. The program has expanded from providing service during a commuter shift in the morning and one in the evening to additional shifts covering weekdays from 7:30 am to 8:00 pm. This means that anyone who needs an on-demand ride, to from stations to work, but also to/from any locations within the service zone can now use their CATA On Demand phone app to access the service within minutes. This is a game changer in several ways and certainly broadens the appeal of the new service to Gloucester residents going about their daily business, getting to their local places of employment, etc. The mobile app is available, training has been completed, and field training is in progress. CATA will be ready to launch this new program on Tuesday, April 20th, 2021. The EDIC will be reaching out to potential corporate sponsors. Presently, the City's Economic Development Department and the EDIC have each committed to donating \$5,000.00 each to the project. CATA needs to find an additional \$10,000.00. CATA is still ironing out the framework for sponsorships. Advertising space will be available on the vans and a press release will be going out to the community. The EDIC voted more than a year ago about making the \$5,000.00 contribution. There is no need for the Board to vote on this again.
- **DiStefano** also informed the Board that the City launched the Local Rapid Recovery plan downtown which is a technical grant received through the Commonwealth. This grant has a dedicated consultant and is forming a steering committee with the goal of recommending projects to the state for funding. There are 119 communities statewide that are going through this process. One of the issues that came up in the initial kickoff is parking. Most recently, through the Shared Streets Grant, we are seeing ramps installed on Main St to increase mobility and pedestrian safety. One of the projects is connecting parking at I4C2 through the alley way on Parsons St to Main Street. This walking route will be outlined in such a way that pedestrians will know what route to follow, and it will direct pedestrians to that parking lot to access Main Street. The goal is to help alleviate parking issues. The City will also have new parking meters installed this spring. This may be a nice way to roll this into the City efforts and to strategically work with CATA.
- **Beaver Solutions:** Acting Chair B. Bramhall met with Mike Callahan from Beaver Solutions and observed the current state of the beaver population by Kondelin Road. Callahan's input was

the situation is fine now. However, the situation will have to be monitored and checked because the beavers are building a damn around the deceiver pipe. When the beavers start building around the sunken pipe then the pipe will have to be moved to a deeper spot. Callahan's estimate is that we are a year or two off from doing this. It all depends on what the beavers do. The beavers can be removed but this would mean exterminating them and a new family of beavers would move in a year or two. When the time comes, we will have to coordinate with the DPW to get a backhoe in there to break up what the beavers have built around the exit pipe and expand the containment area.

- **MassEcon:** T. Balf participated in a presentation and provided an update to the Board. This was a panel discussion that spotlighted the Northeast economy in certain areas of the Commonwealth. Three panelists who were employer's talking about their growth. The other three panelists were economic development folks. There were 75 participants on the zoom call. One interesting statistic from the meeting was the amount of (GDP) gross revenue coming out of Essex and Middlesex counties. Essex and Middlesex counties are ranked 21st with the highest GDP in the state and ranked 50th in the world above New Zealand and Greece. It just gives you an example of how large the GDP is in this area. Balf focused his talk on the emerging role of the EDIC in supporting the growth and tenants in the industrial parks and the EDIC's role in supporting the Blue Economy. He specifically spoke about bringing more bio-manufacturing facilities to Gloucester. The Baker Administration has identified bio-manufacturing as being a critical part of the continued growth in Massachusetts.
- **North Shore Blue Economy:** T. Balf provided the Board with an update that the North Shore Blue Economy is close to finishing their report. They are working on an executive summary and looking at next steps. The areas that are delayed are the economic analysis that was done by UMass Dartmouth Institute which no longer exists. The individual that did the original data tables and charts has agreed to update the materials to 2020. The steering committee will then have to review the final report. We are looking at 4-6 weeks for project completion and another 6-8 weeks for some sort of public announcement.
- **The Harbor Plan:** The City issued an RFP and received 2 responses. Balf is on the reviewing committee. Zoom calls will be set up with both teams that made proposals. The sub-committee will then review the proposals and submit them to the City.
- **Mass Development Presentations:** D. Stefano provided the Board with an update on the meeting that was held by Mass Development and Mass Office of Business Development. A remote meeting was scheduled for business park tenants and owners to review the resources available to companies from the state which include information on grants, loans, and technical assistance. It was an opportunity to review the resources that are out there that are available to businesses. The presentation was recorded and has been posted on their website.
- **The current owner's of Giusti Hingston** have sold the business to another firm. This is the auditing company that the EDIC works with for yearly auditing purposes. The new owners have proposed a 3-year contract agreement (2021- 2023) for the EDIC which would be for

\$5,040.00. There are a limited number of organizations available. Pino moved to authorize signing the contract for the next three years. DiLascio seconds. All were in favor.

- **Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 11th, 2021 at 4:30 pm.**
- **Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.**