



## Town of Warren, Rhode Island

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# Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on December 20, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. Board Members present included Sara Volino, Paula Silva, Karen Dionne, Spencer Morris, and Joel Carey. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB. Ex Officio member Caroline Wells was not present. Jan Martin was in attendance to discuss the Community Garden.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting on November 15, 2010**

The minutes from the regular meeting held on November 15, 2010 were reviewed by the members via email. Ms. Dionne made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

### **2. Review and finalization of 2010-2011 Work Plan**

Ms. Dionne and Ms. Silva presented the revisions they had made to the 2010 Work Plan. The overall goal of reviewing the work plan is to shorten the existing plan into key objectives that can be successfully accomplished by the group. The Board reviewed and discussed several of the objectives including Downtown business improvement, developing a language and criteria for engaging business owners, and tax incentives to benefit the business community. Mr. Morris suggested that the new Work Plan the need to link the Downtown with Metacom Avenue, with Child Street being the link between Main Street and Metacom Avenue. He stated that the language of the EDB mission needs to incorporate the needs of the entire community. Mr. Morris also thought the EDB should be aware of the inventory of leased and vacant commercial real estate in Warren. Ms. Volino said she will invite the town Tax Assessor, Cathy Maisano, to the February meeting.

The Board also discussed the importance of marketing Warren as a destination location, the revitalization of the Discover Warren group, as well as cross-marketing town wide events (Holiday Festival, Warren Walkabout, and Quahog Festival). Another focus of the discussion was the role of the Warren Arts community in the town economy. The Board discussed the need to work more closely with a representative from the Arts community in the future.

The Board agreed to refine the 2011 Work Plan actions based on the following five objectives:

1. Downtown business improvement
2. Integration of Mediacom Avenue with Village Business District
3. Marketing of Warren
4. Warren Arts
5. Speaker Program

Ms. Dionne and Ms. Silva will continue the revision of the draft of the 2010-2011 Work Plan for further review at the January EDB meeting.

### **3. Discussion and Action on 2011-2012 Budget**

Ms. Volino presented the Board with a letter she received from Mr. Paduch requesting a 2011 budget from the EDB by January 5, 2011. The Board agreed to request the following budget items:

1. Banners and Brackets - \$750.00
2. Website Development - \$250.00
3. Printing and Marketing Materials - \$500.00
4. Parking Signage Program (Phase 2) - \$2500.00
5. Gateway Signage (2 signs) - \$3000.00

Mr. Carey will forward a quote for the gateway signage to Ms. Volino before she submits the budget to Mr. Paduch.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the budget, Ms. Dionne seconded the motion, and all members were in favor. Ms. Volino will submit the budget to Mr. Paduch by January 5, 2011.

### **4. Update on Liberty Street School**

The public hearing/workshop to discuss the plans for the Liberty Street School has been postponed until Thursday, January 6, 2011. Mr. Morris reported the meeting he attended with the residents of Liberty Street neighborhood. The main concern was that the plan for 20 residential units is unsuitable for an already dense neighborhood; the residents would prefer a mixed-use commercial development within the envelope of the existing building. The neighbors would like to control the number of units and would prefer owner occupied property. The residents have also identified parking as an issue and would like to see a parking easement for residential parking as part of the development of the school. The Board discussed the potential for a public parking area for the business district on the Liberty Street School property. Ms. Volino stated that she will contact Mr. Frerichs regarding his finding a moderator to conduct the hearing/workshop.

## **5. Discussion on how the EDB can provide support for Hope and Main**

Jan Martin spoke briefly about the EDB, support for the community garden. She discussed possible cooperation with Hope and Main, such as contributing to a farmers market. She also had ideas for a food pantry for fresh produce. Ms. Martin stated that she was attending the meeting for informational purposes; at this time she did not have any specific plan to present to the EDB. The Board thanked her for attending and for sharing her ideas and concerns.

## **6. Status report of parking signage**

The Board discussed Phase 2 of the Parking Signage project as part of the 2011 budget in Agenda Item 3.

A motion was made to adjourn, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

*Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald  
January 17, 2011*

