



## Town of Warren, Rhode Island

---

# Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on July 16, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. The presiding officer was Brandt Heckert. Board members present were Sara Volino, Mark Lombari, Karen Dionne, Christine Lichatz, and Spencer Morris. Board members Kate Dickson, Darcy DaCosta and Patrick DaSocio were absent. Ex officio member Caroline Wells was absent. Town Council member Davison Bolster was present. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB.

### **1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of May 21, 2012**

The minutes from the regular meeting held on May 21, 2012 were reviewed by the members via email. Ms. Volino made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Ms. Dionne and all members were in favor.

The regular meeting held on June 14, 2012 was postponed due to lack of a quorum; there were no meeting minutes from the June meeting.

### **2. Report from gateway signage work group**

The gateway signage work group presented a sample sign for the Board's consideration. Mr. Bolster spoke to the group about his concerns regarding overall signage design consistency throughout the town and stressed the importance of the new gateway signs coordinating with the newly installed municipal signs. The Board continued to discuss design aspects of the proposed gateway signs including colors, font style and whether or not the sign should include the word "village". Mr. Heckert stated that the sign is basically a good design and asked the group to make a decision about how to move forward. After much consideration, the Board agreed to change the background color of the sign to dark red instead of cream. Mr. Lombari said that he will work on securing placement for the signs on the entries to town bordering Bristol (RT 114) and Swansea (RT 146). Ms. Lichatz added that she would like to organize new landscaping around the base of the proposed signs, especially the sign on the entry to Warren from Barrington. The work group will have a final design sample prepared for the August meeting; the Board will then go forward to present the signs for approval from Town Council.

### **3. Update on the Comprehensive Plan (Heckert)**

Mr. Heckert reported on his discussion with the Town Planner regarding the Comprehensive Plan. In order to go forward, the town will need to hire a new firm to

complete the Comprehensive Plan. The Board's work on the economic development section is done, however this section needs to be reviewed by the Planning Board. When the economic development section is approved, it can be added to the Comprehensive Plan. At this time, the Board is waiting for this item to be included on the Planning Board's agenda. Mr. Heckert noted that he had met with Zoning Board member Mr. Gerhardt regarding changes to the sign ordinance; the revisions need to be reviewed by the Town Solicitor before being sent to the Planning Board.

The Board discussed the proposed zoning change for the Wightman's farm property on Metacom Avenue. A meeting is scheduled for July 31<sup>st</sup> for Town Council to vote on changing the zoning on this property from residential to commercial. The Board agreed to submit a letter to Town Council recommending that the decision on this zoning change should be held off until the completion of the Metacom Corridor Study. Mr. Morris agreed to write the letter of recommendation. Ms. Volino made a motion that the EDB submit a letter of recommendation to Town Council for the July 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, the motion was seconded by Ms. Lichatz, and all members were in favor.

#### **4. Update on Discover Warren (Dickson)**

Due to the absence of Ms. Dickson, this item will be revisited at the next meeting. It was noted that a flyer to promote the Shipshape Challenge went out with the new tax bills and that the Discover Warren/WPS Walking Map is in the design process.

#### **5. Discussion and Action on updates to the RI Division of Tourism Travel Guide**

Mr. Heckert reported that in 2011 Warren was lacking in representation in the state's tourism website and guide, but that Warren has more presence in the 2012 edition. Some of Warren's major events, such as the Quahog Festival and the Warren Walk-a-bout are not listed in the calendar of events.

#### **6. Discussion and action on the 2012-2013 EDB work plan**

Mr. Heckert asked the Board to review each objective in the current work plan with the goal of focusing on items that require action in the upcoming year and eliminating items that are either not the purview of the EDB or that the EDB cannot realistically achieve in the year. Mr. Bolster recommended that the Board revise the work plan every three years, and also that items remain on the work plan even if those goals were achieved by groups outside the EDB, such as Discover Warren or Warren Arts Initiative. The Board reviewed each objective and action on the work plan in detail. Ms. MacDonald will work with Mr. Heckert and Ms. Dionne to prepare a draft of the 2012-2013 work plan for review at the August meeting.

Ms. Dionne commented that the EDB would benefit from meeting with Lisa Raiola to discuss the Hope and Main project. There will be a special financial town meeting held sometime between August and October of this year.

Ms. Lichatz asked for an invitation to join the Dropbox in order to post some articles in the EDB file for the Board to review. Ms. MacDonald said she would send her a Dropbox

invitation. Ms. Lichatz also said she would like to contact Caroline Wells regarding the Water Street improvement project.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Morris, the motion was seconded by Ms. Volino, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

The next meeting of the EDB is scheduled for Monday, August 20, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald

August 17, 2012

