



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 17, 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 Benjamin Terry. Board members Kate Dickson and Spencer Morris were absent. Ex officio member Caroline Wells was absent. 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 November 19, 2012**

The minutes from the regular meeting held on November 19, 2012 were reviewed by the members via email. The minutes were approved with the following correction to agenda item 5: there is \$20,000.00 in the storefront improvement budget with an additional \$2,500.00 available for business outreach.

Ms. Volino made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Ms. Dionne and all members were in favor.

### **2. Discussion of EDB board transition**

Mr. Heckert stated that he is resigning from the EDB; however, he plans to continue to attend upcoming meetings to help with the transition as the board acquires new members. Currently there are three open positions on the EDB. The board discussed the rules for being removed from a town board for inconsistent attendance. Mr. Heckert will attend the next EDB meeting in January to discuss the economic development coordinator position with Town Manager Gordon and Town Council President Stanley. The board discussed the need for a point person in Town Hall to facilitate new and existing business needs. The board scheduled a Special Meeting for Monday, January 7, 2013 to further discuss the job functions and responsibilities of the position of economic development coordinator. Mr. Heckert said he will contact Mr. Stanley and Mr. Gordon regarding their availability for Tuesday, January 22, 2013. Also, the board briefly discussed the EDB's potential role in promoting and organizing the Shipshape Challenge. Ms. Dionne will organize the agenda items for the upcoming January meetings.

### **3. Discussion to utilize business outreach funding from the Planner's budget**

There is \$2,500.00 available for business outreach. The board discussed the best use of these funds, including organizing a central database for available commercial property in

Warren. The board also discussed using these funds to promote the storefront improvement program. Mr. Terry said he would contact the Town Planner regarding putting together a flyer or brochure to distribute to business and property owners.

#### **4. Report from the Signage Workgroup**

Mr. Lombardi reported that approval is needed by the state before the remaining two gateway signs can be installed; Town Manager Gordon is working on the approval process. The board discussed replacing the directional sign for the “Warren historic district” on Market Street. Mr. Clare said he would contact Mr. Malik about the possibility of placing a new directional sign on his property on Market Street. The board briefly discussed Main Street and Water Street as the logical locations for the development of new signage, as well as issues removing excess and outdated signage on state property. The signage workgroup will report to the board at the next meeting.

#### **5. Report from the Tax Study Workgroup**

Mr. Terry reported that he met with Caroline Wells to discuss the different tax programs offered in Warren; although she was receptive to posting a tax incentive informational toolkit on the town website, she is concerned about her capacity to be part of putting this together. Mr. Terry, who would also like to meet with Alan Crisman of the Mt. Hope Enterprise Zone, said that this project is still in the research phase and the workgroup will continue to report to the board going forward. Mr. Heckert stated that the town needs practical and concrete tax incentives for small businesses that can be posted on the town website.

The next EDB meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, December 22, 2012, pending the availability of Town Manager Gordon and Town Council President Stanley; a Special EDB meeting to discuss the job description for the position of economic development coordinator is scheduled for Monday, January 7, 2013.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

January 18, 2013



