

MONTAGUE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION  
TOWN HALL  
1 AVENUE A  
TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376

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## MEETING MINUTES

Thursday September 4, 2024 at 4:00PM

### IN PERSON MEETING

Town Hall Annex Meeting Room (ground floor)  
One Avenue A Turners Falls, MA

**Present:** Rob Steinberg, John Furbish, Linda Ackerman, Ella Ingraham

**Absent:** Richard Ruth, Kimbely Williams, James Mussoni

**Staff:** Chris Nolan-Zeller, Maureen Pollock

Meeting opened 4:15 PM Rob Steinberg presiding.

Approval of minutes: **MOTION BY LA to approve the minutes of 7/18/24. Seconded by EI. All Approved. Motion Passed Unanimously.**

Updates on Farren Care Center Site, Next Steps. CNZ introduced Town Planner Maureen Pollock to discuss the site. MP noted that various proposals in high-demand had been verbally raised for re-developing this site, including housing, both indoor and outdoor community spaces, retail, offices, childcare, and several other possibilities.

The next step needed is a re-zoning of the property, which would allow for a combination of uses. A working group was being cultivated to guide the vision of what the property should look like, and to engage with neighbors and the community. Representation from EDIC, the Planning Board, and the Historical Commission would be desired in this group, along with at least two Montague City residents, and two residents with relevant lived experience pertaining to income, language, ability, or other factors.

The Town is awaiting grant award status for technical assistance with these re-zoning efforts, and should know by the end of September.

EI: How do the 3 previous proposals for the site relate to the work this focus group will undertake?

MP: These would each be navigated with the consultant as part of the re-zoning discussion. The selected proposal will need to be designed to meet local needs while also being economically viable to a developer.

RS: Will the re-zoning process allow the Town to shape what it wants the development to look like?

MP: Yes to some extent, but without being too prescriptive.

EI: How far from 10% are we for Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)?

MP: Montague is within one percentage point of this threshold. I hope to oversee an update to the Housing Production Plan, but am prioritizing redevelopment of the Farren site first.

LA: Will minimum parking requirements be evaluated?

MP: I would like to see these examined, both at the Farren site and the surrounding neighborhood, including Rod Shop Road, Masonic Ave, and the area around Montague Machine.

RS: It sounds as though a large re-zoning examination is needed along the corridor from the Canal District down to Montague City.

MP emphasized that numerous opportunities will be available for residents to engage with the process and each other, in order to guide a development project that fits within the community aesthetically, works toward local housing goals, and is practical from a permitting and regulatory perspective.

*MP leaves meeting at 4:47PM.*

RS expressed support for “future-proofing” the Town with a high volume of new housing units.

LA noted that additional social supports were needed to accommodate added housing.

EI expressed that mixed uses were needed, not just affordable housing.

RS: We cannot fill the entire shortage of affordable housing with this site; other properties need to be examined as well.

Discussion: Review Charge and Strategic Direction of the Montague EDIC. Members explained what drew them to participating on this committee.

Meeting adjourned 4:53PM

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Nolan-Zeller, EDIC Coordinator