

Council of Economic Advisors
March 14, 2025
Meeting Minutes
Minutes Approved at June 13, 2025 CEA Meeting

Heidi Frail: Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

Roll Call Taken: Present - Adam Block, Rick Putprush, Lise Elcock, , Adam Meisner, Shuaib Raza, William Mahoney

Absent: Bob Hentschel , Dan Goodman, Bill Day, Jeremy Halpern, Matt Talcoff, Bruan Patel

Staff Present: JP Cacciaglia, Economic Development Manager

Heidi Frail calls meeting to order at 8:00am and notifies the meeting is being conducted in a hybrid fashion, Peter Oneil is also recording the meeting. Introduction of new members. Shuaib Raza Owns and Runs dental business in Needham center and Bill Mahoney is a town meeting member and board member at Beth Israel Deaconess Needham representing the large business in meeting.

Heidi discusses the survey that was sent to members to see what the CEA can do in super local areas Needham. Chestnut Street, Needham Center, Needham Heights, Needham Crossing.

Heidi discusses conversation with Adam Meixner and Mike Wilcox about the Needham Crossing Business district, discussed physical appearance, ideas for improvements for signage, and discussing bringing some food in, connections in transportation options, path, shuttle, etc. Reached out to business to fix some fencing and sprucing up the old Acapulco's site and fixing some landscape issues at Restaurant Depot.

Discussion on the former Acapulcos site on what activity and proposed uses, Adam Block proposed a broker round table to discuss the areas of Needham and asked Adam Meixner about how full the Business Center district is and there has been movement on some of the larger vacant spaces.

Lise Elcock commented on how the news Children's hospital is coming along and will confirm opening date and let the group know.

Heidi Frail and JP Cacciaglia will check on what is an official subcommittee and make sure there are no open meeting violations.

JP Cacciaglia spoke about the history of the "Doing Business in Needham Guide" and how it came to be. Heidi spoke about the goal of it being an operational guide of business looking to come to Needham and what it needs to be and that even after. JP Cacciaglia gave a run though of the document and the fine tuning of the notion.

Rick Putprush though it was daunting looking though it and asked if there was a time frame on the document.

Heidi spoke to abbreviate the guide where it would be 2 pages with just contact information and links to the website for more in-depth information, spoke of the key information needed. Push the first opening of a business section to other resources the website.

Rick Putprush spoke about trying to streamline the process and make it easier to open.

Adam Block spoke about a map with the core uses, a flowchart of time of the process and link to resources that people may find useful.

Heidi Frail side the most important thing is just contacting people with the appropriate Town staff and break down, special permit with the planning board, variance with the Zoning Board etc. Remove development review team, keep information simple.

Rick Putprush said to add how often these different boards meet.

JP Cacciaglia will send a guide out to everyone for comments and individually send it back to him without reply to all and he compile all of the changes in the common document.

Heidi Frail spoke it of living on the website rather than as a paper document.

Adam Block commented on having contact information to the Planning department and having images of a map of land use. Spoke how a lot of business do require a special permit.

Lise Elcock spoke about the Envision Needham plan and the Webinar on Envision Needham, it will impact businesses that in the area and it is important that they know about the project. Talked how the new chamber membership will be free for “mom and pop” type businesses and allow them to get receive some of the chamber resources to help support their small business.

Adam Block asked that a link to the committee of the Envision Needham Project Webinar that the Chamber had with businesses.

Heidi mentioned that each place is unique and as such location has unique issues and discussions will be held in the future about how each area could benefit from the CEA.

Adam Block to adjourn, Rick Putprush second, Motion Carries All Adjourn 9:01am