

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2013

Present: Ald. Linsky (Chairman), Lappin and Blazar
Present from Economic Development: Darryl Settles (Chairman), Chris Steele, Ron Lipof, Jane Ives, Charles Eisenberg, Barry Abramson, Frank McGehee, Charles Rudnick, Daphne Collins, Robert Finkel, and Jack Leader
City staff present: James Freas (Chief Planner for Long Range Planning), and Amanda Stout (Senior Economic Development Planner)

The Committee convened at 7 PM and met jointly with the Economic Development Commission to discuss the goals and priorities of both the Committee and Commission for the upcoming year.

The Economic Development Commission's leadership team met and determined that the focus in the upcoming year would be on short-term, obtainable goals. The Chair of the Economic Development Commission presented the goals. The team narrowed the focus down to three themes: marketing, development opportunities, and business development. The priorities for 2013 are either a focus on one or multiple themes, as highlighted in the attached matrix, which also provides further details on the themes and priorities.

The priorities for 2013 include the development of a promotional map highlighting restaurants and other points of interest in the City. The map would be available in print form and on the web. Members of both the Commission and Committee thought that the promotional map was a great tool for promoting Newton to both residents and visitors. The Economic Development Commission is organizing and hosting the annual Business Excellence Awards to promote goodwill between the City and the business community.

The Economic Development Commission and the Long Range Planning Committee plan to continue to work together on business development issues such as zoning reform. The Commission would also like to work with the Aldermen to encourage the Administration to hire a Business Development Officer to support marketing, recruitment, promote business development and development opportunities within the City. A Business Development Officer would also be able to provide input into the discussions around zoning reform. Members of both the Commission and Committee felt it would be helpful to invite the Development Officer for the City of Boston Randi Lathrop to share her experience developing the Main Streets Program in the South End and Downtown Crossing.

There is also a plan to work with area councils and neighborhood associations to develop business plans to market village centers and encourage business growth in village centers. It is important to use the same parameters to develop a business plan for village centers.

Chair of the Long Range Planning Committee Ald. Linsky stated that the Committee and Commission have been meeting periodically, which has resulted in open communications between the Board of Aldermen and the Economic Development Commission. The Committee and Commission have had several discussions related to development in the City including current projects like the Riverside Station development and the Chestnut Hill developments. The Chair added that the Committee and Commission should encourage the City to promote Newton as a viable location for businesses.

The Board of Aldermen is looking at village center zoning to encourage vitality. Several of the Board's Committees are also looking at the possibility of allowing food trucks within the City. It would be beneficial for the Commission and Committee to look at mobile food truck industry and how other Cities regulate the industry.

The Long Range Planning Committee will be looking for input from the Economic Development Commission regarding the possible implementation of regulations related to polystyrene products and plastic bags and how to coordinate those regulations with businesses.

The Long Range Planning Committee and the Economic Development Commission will continue to work together on the Economic Development Assessment Tool, the zoning reform proposal and the creation of business plans for the villages. The Commission and the Committee are looking forward to continuing their collaborative efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen M. Linsky, Chairman

Three Themes

MARKETING	DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
The Marketing focus area includes implementing creative solutions to promote Newton, our businesses, and our community to a variety of internal and external audiences, towards a goal of filling vacancies and drawing new business to the City.	Newton's village centers and commercial corridors are tremendous assets. This focus area includes improving the development potential of our villages and corridors and prioritizing developable areas to encourage greater return on investment for the City.	This focus area is where the EDC interfaces with zoning and other regulatory measures to support broad business goals, as well as specific topics such as biotechnology and housing. Projects that support entrepreneurs and small businesses are also included.

Priorities for 2013

Create a Promotional Map , with web and print versions, to highlight restaurants and other attractions throughout Newton's villages.	Marketing		
Support concept of hiring a Business Development Officer , a staff position to engage on marketing, recruitment, and business development	Marketing	Devel Opps	Biz Devel
Work with Village groups (Area Councils, Neighborhood Associations, etc.) to write business plans to advance marketing and encourage appropriate development in village centers.	Marketing		Biz Devel
Engage directly in the current Zoning Reform conversation aimed at revising the City's Zoning Ordinance.			Biz Devel

Annual Projects and Ongoing Partnerships

Organize and host the annual Business Excellence Awards to celebrate and acknowledge the businesses that have made a significant contribution to the City and to foster goodwill between the City and business community.	Marketing		
Support Planning & Development Department with analysis of specific development sites, as needed.			Devel Opps
Hold formal or informal conversations with the real estate development community to better understand (mis)perceptions that might be addressed through targeted marketing and challenges that might be addressed through regulatory reform.	Marketing	Biz Devel	
Partner with the Board of Aldermen on economic development topics, including opportunities to encourage development at appropriate sites and regulatory concerns to businesses.			Devel Opps Biz Devel