

**ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 19, 2015**

A meeting of the Advisory & Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2015. The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Moody at 7:00PM and was conducted in the Mayflower I Meeting Room at the Plymouth Town Hall, 11 Lincoln Street, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

PRESENT **Eleven members of the committee were present:**
Belinda Brewster, Kevin Canty, Betty Cavacco, Harry Helm, Shelagh Joyce, Patricia McPherson, Christopher Merrill, John Moody, Patrick O'Brien, Harry Salerno, Marc Sirrico

ABSENT **Four members of the committee were absent:**
Richard Gladdys, Kevin Hennessey, Ethan Kusmin, Marcus McGraw

AGENDA ITEMS

➤ **Introduce New Member – Belinda Brewster**
New Advisory & Finance Committee Member, Belinda Brewster, was introduced. Belinda is a life-long Plymouth resident, former Plymouth Selectman, and has a child in the Plymouth Public Schools. She has her MBA and works primarily researching and writing about economic conditions and investments. She is a fiscal conservative who cares about Plymouth's tax rate. She is happy to be appointed to the Advisory & Finance Committee.

➤ **Economic Development**
Presenting updates on Plymouth's Economic Development were:

- Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning & Development
- Jessica Casey, Economic Development Director
- Michele Pecoraro, Executive Director – Plymouth 400
- Paul Cripps, Executive Director – Destination Plymouth
- The tourism industry brings in approximately \$350 million annually in Plymouth.
- The Economic Development Foundation is a bridge between businesses looking at Plymouth and Town Hall.
- The Foundation is looking at sectors with growth potential: health, technology, R&D.
- Other communities are competing for the same industry sectors.
- Plymouth has some big challenges - only 4% of land is zoned commercial industrial.
- We need to plan ahead for this limited land to make the most of what we have.
- We also need to look at that land in connection with open space.
- Entergy employs 560 in Plymouth. Their wages skew the average income in Plymouth.

Immediate opportunities for economic development:

1. Community Compact Agreement with the State:
 - a) Preparing Success and Partnerships
 - b) Job Creation and Retention
 - c) Sustainable Development & Land Protection
2. MassWorks Intrastructure Grant:
 - a) Cordage –150 residential units, \$600,000 incentive payment
 - b) T-Wharf Reconstruction –1,000 jobs depend on the TWharf, lots of opportunity
 - c) Water Street Promenade - \$7.75 million grant to enlarge sidewalks, add lighting, benches, etc. to improve that area

Plymouth 400 is worthy of national commemoration. America is poised for an anniversary of national and international significance, the 400th anniversary of the mayflower voyage and the founding of Plymouth Colony. The Plymouth 400 anniversary will highlight the cultural contributions and American traditions that began with the interaction of the Wampanoag and English peoples, a story that significantly shaped the building of America.

There are lots of Signature Events and programs being planned including:

- Historical and cultural exhibitions
- Live, televised and web events
- Multi-day festivals
- Original arts and entertainment collaborations
- Educational programming and resources

2020 – why do it?

- Tourism and economic development value
- National and international recognition
- Cultural, Educational and Civic Engagement
- Commemoration legacies

Tourism is the #1 industry in Plymouth County.

The county sees 2.3 million visitors annually, spending \$600+ million annually

There are 3,700 jobs in Plymouth County's tourism industry.

In 2020 Plymouth County will see an estimated 7 million visitors, spending \$2.2 billion

Job creation: 9,500+

Additional Economic Potential:

- New business cultivation, existing business growth & entrepreneurial opportunities
- New lodging and tourism product (apps, educational exhibits, unique tour experiences, joint airline and cruise partnerships, etc.)
- Rise in lodging and meals tax revenue
- Increase in media interest generating new stories and greater exposure
- Sustainable economic plan beyond 2020 (MA 400)

Revenue Generation:

- Partner program
- Signature sponsorships
- Foundation grants
- Private donors
- Specialty license plate
- US minted coins
- US postage stamps
- Official merchandise
- Pre-commemoration events

The Plymouth 400 staff and volunteers are working to:

- Activate the State Commission
- Form a Federal commission
- Work with legislators to secure state and federal funding

- Keep Senators and Representatives informed and engaged in P400 activities
- Washington DC Meetings
- Work with state agencies including MOTT, Massport, MassDOT, DCR, MCC

The State is considering a MA400 budget line.

Questions/Comments:

- Will revenues cover the full cost of events or will there be a tax impact? Event costs will total \$16-\$20 million. Revenues will more than cover the costs. We are being careful and cautious about the impact to the Town.
- What if the \$7.7 million grant does not happen? We will reevaluate and scale back the plans to not hit the tax rate.
- Is there an analysis available of the T-Wharf so we can see the math? It is being drafted now. Renovation should triple the commercial vessel capacity.
- There are a lot of questions in the community about Plymouth 400 and whether it will affect the tax rate. Do you plan to do any outreach to the general population? We do a televised quarterly report to the Board of Selectmen, we hold 2-3 community meetings per quarter, we have a presentation available, we have a website, facebook page, blog three times per week, we are willing to go anywhere with our presentation, have been focusing on Plymouth but will go to other towns, mix social media and face to face. Sponsorships pay the majority of these costs.
- Are you having a license plate release event? We would love to, we are waiting on the registry about the timeline for the license plates. We may also have an auction for premier plates
- Infrastructure improvements are really the best marketing opportunity to attract new businesses.
- What are we actively doing to recruit industry to Plymouth? We are meeting weekly to formulate and talk about ideas to do this.
- We are going to see a lot of changes to hotels in the next few years.
- 4% zoned commercial/industrial is sorely inadequate.
- Is it possible to transition more land from residential to commercial? We are currently doing an inventory of all retail, commercial, office space, town owned land, state owned land, and vacant space to look at the clusters or patterns and identify areas for development.
- Every year we seem to add 20 or more acres to open space and conservation.
- While we need to be respectful of preservation and conservation, we need to balance that with economic development. We know change is going to happen. What do we want that to look like? In two years we will have our plan ready as part of the Community Compact Agreement. We will identify our opportunities and challenges. Plymouth can be a hub to higher academic institutions. We have the quality of life and workforce population to attract new campuses and companies.
- 4-5 Years ago the Land Use Study Committee prepared a detailed report with goals and tactics. Is that being used? Know the attempt to remove the 75' height restriction has failed twice at Town Meeting. Anything else? Yes, the sewer extension mentioned in that plan is happening. A car dealership is going in on Pilgrim Hill Road. Some of those recommendations have been done.

- The Plymouth community has the BANANA mentality – build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything, it is an uphill battle for us to find compromises. It is difficult to make changes when 2/3 of the Town Meeting vote is required.
- Are you collaborating with the CPC? A little bit, we have sat down together and are aligning.

➤ **Sub-Committee & Liaison Appointments**

Budget Sub-Committee and Committee Liaison assignments were handed out.

➤ **Fall Town Meeting Scheduling**

Article presenters are not ready so we will not have a meeting on August 26th. We need to look at adding one or two Thursdays to our meeting schedule to hear all of the articles before we have to go to print on September 18th with our books. The committee discussed and agreed to meet both Wednesdays and Thursdays and to begin meetings at 6:30PM rather than 7PM to have more time to hear the article presentations. Meetings will be September 2, 3, 9, 10, 16 and 17th.

Meeting Minutes

- July 15, 2015: **Patrick O'Brien made a motion to approve the July 15, 2015 meeting minutes. Kevin Canty, second. The motion carries (8-0-2). Betty Cavacco and Belinda Brewster, abstained.**

ADJOURNMENT

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to adjourn. Kevin Canty, second.

The motion for adjournment carries unanimously (10-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kere Gillette