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Town Bows to Chamber of Commerce for Economic Development



Above, Chamber of Commerce President, Bob McGuire and Executive Director, Timothy Kilduff at Board of Selectmen meeting.

September 6, 2011 — The Board of Selectmen has lowered the final curtain on the Economic Development Committee that sought to encourage business to site or expand in Hopkinton, and instead, given the members-only, private, non-profit Chamber of Commerce the green light to take its place.

Selectmen voted to accept a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and a recently formed Chamber group called 2020, that sought successfully to have their vision last until at least that year, with annual reviews until then. The group is comprised of such notables as the Chamber members above, as well as residents Ron Eldridge, Joe Markey, Peter Mezitt, Ben Palleiko, Finley Perry, Scott Richardson, Steven Zieff and Kim Collins.

The group, which has already earned high praise from Town Manager Norman Khumalo and Selectman Ben Palleiko, promises to, in concert with the town, strive to retain and grow competitive and established commercial and industrial bases.

They promise to seek businesses and business segments that are looking for a place like Hopkinton, and to make resource information available; such as needed permits, costs and timelines.

"The Chamber shall assist the Town in promoting Hopkinton's economic and community development," reads Line One of the agreement, which takes effect September 20, 2011.

Hopkinton to market itself through Chamber of Commerce

By Michael Morton/Daily News staff

MetroWest Daily News

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HOPKINTON —

Selectmen last night signed an agreement designating the town's Chamber of Commerce its official marketer, a move meant to attract new businesses and spur development.

The Hopkinton Chamber of Commerce has historically worked toward those goals on its own, Norman Khumalo said, with the new deal formalizing that role and ensuring coordination.

Khumalo cautioned, however, that the agreement does not usurp the regulatory and permitting power of town boards nor supplant their role.

Selectman John Mosher also acknowledged worries from some residents, pledging that the initiative is not meant to develop all existing open space but rather attract amenities like restaurants and bike paths benefiting both homeowners and business owners.

"This is not a simplistic, pro-business thing," he said. "I think this is a great step in the right direction."

Specifically, the chamber has created a campaign called "Hopkinton 2020" and gathered a task force that includes Selectman Ben Palleiko, Planning Board Chairman Joe Markey, Weston Nurseries owner Peter Mezitt and Legacy Farms Project Manager Steven Zieff. Builder Fin Perry is the chairman.

Working with the town's existing Master Plan, the task force will study the town's infrastructure and meet with state agencies and leaders, regional planning groups, businesses, landowners, real estate brokers and others.

The task force plans to publish a town business guide, create a website touting town amenities and suggest zoning changes. Those changes would be considered for possible presentation at Town Meeting, where two-thirds approval is required.

The deal with the chamber runs through 2020, with regular reports to selectmen and an annual review.

In other business, the board:

Udecided to help local rescue group Greyhound Friends expand from 22 greyhounds to 30 and resolve a state cease-and-desist order that apparently came from an inspector including staff pets in the count of allowable dogs.

Uapproved a \$1 per year lease for the Hopkinton Community Arts Center and Hopkinton Community Endowment to create a new cultural arts space at 98 Hayden Rowe St., next to the High School.

Uvoted to spend \$90,000 from a \$125,000 insurance settlement for two large, movable storage tents to replace the Wood Street pole barn that partially collapsed from snow.

Uagreed that the Police Department should begin looking for an officer to replace someone who is expected to leave for another job.

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