



Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force Minutes

Date: Tuesday February 16, 2021

Time: 2:00-3:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/j/96211802074>

Meeting ID: 962 1180 2074

Passcode: 776846

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Present: Jennifer Raitt, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Ali Carter, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Janet O’Riordan, Old Schwamb Mill; Erik Kondo, Broadway Athletics; Emily Shea, Kickstand Café; Leland Stein, Regent Theater; John Hurd, Select Board; Bootsy Mullan; Town Tavern; Kathleen Darcy, Cambridge Savings Bank; Sarah Morgan-Wu; Rachel Zsembery, Arlington Redevelopment Authority

Guest: Len Diggins

Minutes

1. Approval of minutes. Motion made by Erik Kondo, seconded by Emily Shea. Approved unanimously.
2. Public Health update: there are currently 1,506 positive covid cases so far in Arlington, and 76 deaths. There have also been 115 probably cases and 1,001 known recovered cases. Local positivity rate is falling along with the rest of the state. Vaccination of first responders is being done by the Town. The State is prioritizing mass vaccination sites and private pharmacies over local vaccination sites run by municipalities, so at this time there will be no vaccination sites for members of the public in Arlington.
Kathleen Darcy commented that there are extra doses at local clinics where they have found recipients from folks in eligible age range, currently 75+ years old or in senior housing.
3. Prioritizing new seasonal programs: Ali reported that the Temporary Outdoor Dining License program will continue in 2021 and that she is going to the Park

and Recreation Commission on March 9th to request the resumption of the Temporary Outdoor Fitness and Arts Program in the parks this spring and summer.

These programs are well established; however, we need to create supports for industries and workers still unable to reopen, particularly arts and culture-related industries. Cristin Bagnall, the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) representative on the Task Force has been working with DPCD to create a framework for outdoor entertainment. Right now, we are looking at creating models for synchronous and asynchronous programming for arts and culture industries and workers. Ali opened the floor to discussion and feedback from Task Force members.

Discussion: The group generally expressed support for these measures. It was noted that Porchfest should be allowed to happen with provisions for as little congregating as possible. Street performance should also be allowed but with revised regulations with COVID protocols built in. Some street performances were done informally at businesses last year without issue. Historically, Porchfest has been a huge day for businesses in town, so to have it postponed another year would not be good for business. Mill Pond Park at the Old Schwamb Mill has a nice setting for small outdoor performances. It would be great if musicians could perform in alignment with outdoor seating set ups. We need to get this program up and running quickly so we are ready when the weather is nice. It will be important to accommodate paid programming and free programming.

Ali will share draft regulations with Task Force at next meeting and subsequently bring them to the Select Board.

4. Communications

- a. Current practices: Ali reviewed current practices for communicating about Reopening Guidelines, grant opportunities, etc. between the Town and business owners and asked if anyone had ideas for areas of improvement. Several folks commented that they thought the current methods were effective but that messaging to the public of the guidelines and how they can report violations is lacking.
- b. New ideas for outreach and engagement: The group had a discussion about finding ways to communicate to the public that they need to be compliant with the rules that State and Town are imposing on the business owners, and also how they can report non-compliance when they see it. Launching a campaign called “Masks Mean Business,” encouraging continuation of mask-wearing protocols and the proper way to wear them was discussed. Having posters with information on how to report non-compliance to the Town and State, and that they are the Town and State’s rules, not the business owners, was discussed as well. Erik Kondo believes it is important for people to be able to report things anonymously. Jenny pointed out that anonymous complaints can be left with the Town via the Request/Answer Center phone number and app. Signage, stickers, and social media could also communicate messages of how the public can report non-compliance. Ali will schedule working group meetings to

see if we can get some agreement around a single theme. Jenny will bring up the issues raised about communication of enforcement to the Leadership Team. Ali will request that a member of the Health Department be present at the next meeting to provide guidance for restaurants to plan for the coming months.

Next meeting: Tuesday March 16, 2021 at 2 p.m.