

- Called to order at 6:02PM
- Present: Chair Honan, Councilor Flockhart, Councilor Ruggiero, Planner Rachel Kelly, Chamber Executive Director Betsy Shane
- Meeting scheduled to brainstorm ideas about post-COVID economic development ideas – how the Council can be helpful
- Ms. Shane – what is the goal/objectives of the committee?
- Chair Honan – generally, this committee was assigned to help create zoning for MS sight, now trying to shift direction after zoning is complete
- Ms. Shane – Economic development has to do with money producing opportunities in the community; we need to take a 30,000 foot approach
- Councilor Flockhart – has anyone studied vacant commercial space?
- Ms. Shane - Winthrop Center has 81 businesses and has all their contact information. There are “no” empty spaces but it might not be a “charming” area. Delby’s corner is full. Crest Ave business district is full. Veterans Rd commercial spaces are also full. The Middle School is the most valuable piece of property that can be used to produce income in town.
- Chair Honan – what is the business community’s biggest hurdle?
- Councilor Ruggiero – what are we defining as a “successful business”?
- Ms. Shane – Staying open. Restaurants can draw from out of town but the other businesses may not be able to. Housing drives retail. “Wants and needs” – what services do we “want” but what do we “need.” Winthrop needs to define “who it is.” We have an opportunity being close to Boston and on the water but we need to figure out how to leverage it. Golf Course is an opportunity. Water transportation is an opportunity. Rink is an opportunity
- Councilor Ruggiero – how can we leverage water transportation to bring in revenues?
- The Chamber runs events that are, in other communities, typically run by the Town.
- Ms. Shane – the walkability of Winthrop center. Is the discussion about remedying the “leak” out of Winthrop (keeping money in) or bringing outside money into Town as well?
- Ms. Shane – the Center is almost complete and it would be nice to have some sort of celebration this winter.
- Chair Honan – what can the Council do to help drive economic development?
- Planner Kelly – State resources. “One Stop for Growth.” There are a variety of projects that can be funded but the more specific, the better.
- Ms. Shane – Council, Chamber, Town Administration should be ready to talk about the Middle School site with facts and figures. The Town needs to come to bring more folks to the table to show that Winthrop is open to development. There needs to be as much data to drive decisions as possible
- Planner Kelly gives update on status of the Middle School site – RFPs, etc.
- Ms. Shane – there needs to be a more clear process as to how someone can open a business in Winthrop. There are often times many departments, approvals, needed and it can be challenging to navigate the process
- Councilor Ruggiero – are there façade redevelopment grants available that can make Winthrop more aesthetically appealing?
- Next steps – clear path/process for MS site, necessary for this group to meet more often, One Stop for Growth may be helpful.
- Motion to adjourn by Councilor Ruggiero, Seconded by Councilor Flockhart, Passed unanimously