Inner Core Committee
A subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council including 21 cities and towns:
Arlington • Belmont • Boston • Brookline • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Lynn • Malden • Medford • Melrose • Milton • Needham • Newton • Quincy • Revere • Saugus • Somerville • Waltham • Watertown • Winthrop

ICC June Meeting - Economic Development
Wednesday, June 17, 8:45 - 11:00 am
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Participants

1. Dan Bartman, Somerville
2. Catherine Cagle, Waltham
3. John DePreist, Chelsea
4. Alicia Hunt, Medford
5. Joe King, Quincy
6. Steve Magoon, Watertown
7. Alex Mello, Saugus
8. Amelia Najjar, Boston
10. Emma Schnur, Melrose
11. Alison Steinfeld, Brookline
12. Erin Zwirko, Arlington

Guests: Ali Carter, Economic Development Coordinator, Town of Arlington; Betsy Cowan, Chief of Economic Development, MAPC; Leah Roberts, Government Affairs Specialist, MAPC; Stefanie Schull, Director, CONNECT Partnership, TND

Small Business Recovery

- MAPC has been working with Arlington, Medford, and Salem to understand the needs of small businesses and share important information among municipal entities
- Key findings:
  - Increase revenue for small businesses
  - Set up task forces to make sure businesses are up to date
  - Explore regulatory changes
  - Provide support services
  - Promote and message to customers that businesses are open and complying
  - Facilitate shared streets; use the street for commercial activity like outdoor dining and vending
  - Offer technical assistance for rethinking businesses operations, such as putting products online, etc.
  - Decrease cost of doing business
  - Provide direct financial assistance; consider ways to be flexible with municipal budgets to support businesses
  - Deferred payments (partnering with Chambers of Commerce)
  - Support cap on delivery processing fees (Grubhub etc.)/pursue legislation to cap these fees
  - Protect public health
- Help businesses with accessing PPE; partner with Chambers and others or serve as a conduit
- Communicate regulations; boards of health and licensing needs to get information in advance
  - Resources:
    - Small Business Guide
    - Shared Streets
    - MassDOT grant opportunity ($5K-$300K) for communities to access equipment to facilitate shared streets

- Ali Carter, Arlington
  - Outdoor dining
    - Streamlined applications process
    - Expedited sidewalk licenses if certain criteria are met
    - See diagram here
  - Signage campaign
    - Uniform signage for businesses to put in their storefront: “We’ll be back soon”, “We’re open for business,” etc.
    - Provided and delivered to 40 businesses for free
    - Provided businesses with stickers: “No shirt, no shoes, no mask, no service”
  - Focus groups
    - Fitness and rec, arts and culture, personal care, retail, restaurants, finance, insurance, real estate
    - People feel they are paying too much for PPE
    - Feelings of uncertainty
  - Consumer survey
    - Over a thousand responses
    - Respondents are very reluctant to reengage with businesses, particularly indoor dining

- Alicia Hunt, Medford
  - Utilizing a CDBG consultant
  - Running a small business support program
  - Outdoor dining
    - Medford interpretation is that customers can enter the business for bathroom use; porta potties are very unsanitary as they don’t flush
    - Will allow a handwashing sink

- Jeff Roberts, Cambridge
  - Suspended zoning during the state of emergency
  - Established a centralized license commission
  - Online permitting system launched two weeks ago
  - Central Square BID organized communal resources to establish an outdoor venue to support performance establishments and other efforts

Workforce Development Strategies
• MAPC findings
  o Find new ways to inform residents of available resources
    ▪ Unemployment requirements have changed; it is no longer mandatory for individuals to visit the career center so they aren’t aware of the resources being offered
  o Identify immediate and future job opportunities
    ▪ Many sectors/industries/firms don’t know if they have the capacity to bring people on
    ▪ Medical manufacturing is now hiring
    ▪ Hospitals had reduced staff, but are now looking to bring folks back on
  o Needs
    ▪ MAPC pushing the Department of Unemployment Assistance to share more data
    ▪ Gap between employer health services and what employees need

• CONNECT Partnership, TND
  o Established a Good Jobs Coalition
    ▪ CBOs working together on workforce development in the Chelsea area
    ▪ Nonprofits in partnership allow for flexibility; able to move faster than government
    ▪ Sought MAPC grant for workforce development plan
    ▪ Recently received a MassUp grant
    ▪ City Council and community are focused on WFD
  o Needs
    ▪ Significant portion of the workforce was in the service industry, very hard hit; uncertainty around when these jobs will come back
    ▪ COVID-19 exposed new focus areas on the digital divide and childcare gaps
  o Efforts
    ▪ Built a database and systems for coordination
    ▪ Educating the public on economic labor payments
    ▪ Set up a hotline so people can access funds virtually
    ▪ Raised over $1 million in funds, dispersed directly to families
    ▪ Training and adult education now online; more transferrable skills are being taught as uncertainty remains around what industries will come back
    ▪ Assessing where people are and how they connect to resources; need for shared database to collect this information

• Discussion
  o Time is of the essence
    ▪ Expedite permitting to help businesses get back up and running; eliminate the barriers caused by authorities and silos
      ▪ Somerville: The Traffic Commission has given over permitting responsibility to staff; all parking spaces are up for grabs; offering guidance on sidewalk services
Partnerships are key

- Resources
  - Boston PIC
  - MassHire
  - Boston Foundation’s Catapult project

- Poverty and economic mobility are a public health crisis; get hospitals and public health institutions involved
- Cambridge: MIT will fund and create a job center
- Chelsea: Addressing the digital divide through the Chelsea library tech lending program for people in adult education and programs to provide Microsoft office licenses, laptops, and T-Mobile hotspots to workers

Vote on FY21 Work Plan and co-chairs

- FY21 Work Plan
  - The work plan was unanimously adopted with 13 “yes” votes
- FY21 co-chairs
  - Dan Bartman, Somerville, and John DePriest, Chelsea, were unanimously voted to serve another term as co-chairs with 11 “yes” votes

Legislative Update

- Chapter 92 signed into law on June 5th allows:
  - Reduced quorum to 90%
  - Town meeting to be held beyond town borders
  - Representative town meetings to be held remotely (during the state of emergency)
  - Extended deadlines for elections (as far as August 1st)
  - Caucus can be by ballot
  - Extended budgeting
- COVID 19 Data and Reporting bill (4774) signed into law
- Legislature put forth bill S.2740 authorizing local licensing authority to amend liquor licenses for sale of mixed drinks for off premise consumption
- Economic Development Bond Bill will hopefully focus on economic recovery
- Waiting on Transportation Bill
- Next steps
  - Typically recess in July; but we expect they will come back in the fall
  - Take up FY21 budget; probably a 1/12th or 1/6th budget
  - Policing bill might come before budget
  - Bond Bill will probably follow the budget