

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 | 5. Joe King, Quincy | 10. Emma Schnur,
Melrose |
| 2. Catherine Cagle,
Waltham | 6. Steve Magoon,
Watertown | 11. Alison Steinfeld,
Brookline |
| 3. John DePreist,
Chelsea | 7. Alex Mello, Saugus | 12. Erin Zwirko,
Arlington |
| 4. Alicia Hunt,
Medford | 8. Amelia Najjar,
Boston | |
| | 9. Jeff Roberts,
Cambridge | |

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
 - 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
 - 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
 - Needs
 - MAPC pushing the Department of Unemployment Assistance to share more data
 - Gap between employer health services and what employees need
- CONNECT Partnership, TND
 - 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
 - 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
 - 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
 - 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