



# Economic Development Commission (EDC)

Meeting Notes – March 10, 2026

Meeting called to order: 5:02 p.m. by Chair Brett Robbins

**Attendees:** Brett Robbins (Chair), Cheryl Heller, Sue Frisch, Jon Riedeman, Robert Whipple, Thomas McGowan

Absent: Jennifer Almquist, Libby Borden

---

## 1. Approval of Prior Minutes

February EDC meeting minutes were reviewed.

Motion to approve was made and seconded.

Approved unanimously.

---

## 2. Business Survey – Results & Next Steps

Cheryl presented initial results from the recently distributed business survey.

- 21 responses received (including a small number of test submissions)
- Strong engagement, with thoughtful and detailed responses
- Majority of responses came from direct outreach emails rather than newsletter or website posts

### Key Insights:

- Businesses span a wide range of industries, primarily small or solo operators
- Top areas of interest include:
  - Publicity and communications
  - Branding and identity
  - Marketing
  - Financial management
  - Sustainable business practices
- Moderate interest in loans, grants, and new technologies
- Majority expressed interest in participating in a business community or follow-up discussions

The group agreed that the responses provide valuable direction and should be actively leveraged.

**Discussion Highlights:**

- Current responses are skewed toward known contacts; need broader reach
- Additional outreach channels suggested:
  - Town newsletter and website
  - Local organizations (e.g., Lions Club, Fire Department, ambulance service)
  - Social media groups and community platforms
  - Physical flyers in high-traffic locations (e.g., post office)

**Action Items:**

- Cheryl to draft a summary article highlighting survey insights and encouraging additional participation
  - Submit article to town newsletter (via Catherine Bowden) and The Hub
  - Brett to share via community groups and Lions Club outreach
  - Jon to explore distribution via fire department and ambulance mailing lists
  - All members to forward survey to relevant contacts
- 

### **3. Communications & Visibility Strategy**

Discussion focused on improving ongoing communication with the local business community.

Brett proposed introducing a **monthly EDC column in Norfolk Now** to:

- Share updates on EDC initiatives
- Highlight local business topics and opportunities
- Increase visibility and accessibility of the Commission

Group feedback:

- Strong support for establishing a regular presence
- Flexibility suggested to align content with meaningful updates or initiatives
- Potential to rotate authorship among members

**Action Items:**

- Brett to draft initial column and contact Norfolk Now ([editor@norfolknow.org](mailto:editor@norfolknow.org))
  - Determine editorial process and submission guidelines
  - Explore ongoing content themes and contributors
- 

### **4. Winter Weekend (WIN) Recap**

Sue provided a summary of the recent Winter Weekend event:

- Strong community engagement and positive overall atmosphere
- Increased number of events compared to prior years
- Weather impacted attendance on Sunday
- Successful performances and programming, including a well-received brass quintet
- Early planning underway for next summer's event (July 31 – August 2)

Additional updates:

- Continued focus on evolving event format based on community feedback
- Exploration of sponsors, food trucks, and expanded participation opportunities

**Action Item:**

- Sue to prepare and share a short written summary of the event for broader communication
- 

## 5. New Member Recommendation

Cheryl introduced **Peter Aziz** as a potential new EDC member:

- Owner of a home energy company based in Watertown
- Norfolk resident with strong community involvement
- Background in business and interest in supporting local economic development
- Recommended by local planning leadership

The group expressed interest in moving forward.

**Next Steps:**

- Schedule an in-person meeting with Peter Aziz and EDC members
- Provide overview of EDC initiatives and assess mutual fit

**Action Item:**

- Coordinate meeting and agenda with prospective member
- 

## 6. Board Composition Update

- One vacancy currently exists on the main board
- One vacancy exists for an alternate member

Discussion clarified the role of alternates (do not count toward quorum but can participate).

---

## **7. Other Business**

No additional items raised.

---

## **8. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.