



Economic Vitality Committee
Meeting, February 11, 2026 – 4:30 pm
Hybrid meeting, Town House
Minutes

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Mike Lawson with a quorum present.

Members present: Chair Michael Lawson and Mimi Graney, Stewart Ikeda, Chris LaFrance, Betsy Levinson, Mark Martines, Steve Verrill, Beth Williams,

Members absent: Glenn Burlamachi, Greg Higgins, Tom Wilson

Guests: liaisons Select Board Mary Hartman, Lindsay Wolf of WCAC

2. Minutes: Minutes of November and January were unanimously approved.
3. Arts & Cultural/Business Forum: Stewart Ikeda presented a detailed proposal from the subcommittee, providing additional detail on the proposed event. A fact sheet detailed the relevance of the creative economy to the Town, noting that 1 in 4 workers in Concord are within this sector. Goal is for Concord artists, creative organizations, business owners, and economic vitality advocates to build relationships, deepen mutual understanding, and identify practical ways the arts and business sectors can support one another. Through facilitated dialogue and peer exchange, the forum aims to translate shared interests into actionable connections that strengthen Concord's creative economy and local business vitality. The proposed setting is the offices of Barefoot Books, selected for their creative and engaging environment. The suggested format includes a brief presentation on the impact of the creative economy, followed by a combination of small- and large-group discussions. Meeting proposed for early May with 50 to 60 attendees. Betsy Levinson offered assistance to the subcommittee (Stewart, Tom, Beth and Mimi) on marketing.
Committee voted unanimously approved the execution of the event.

4. Planning Board Warrant Article – Modification of Height in Limited Business District #1 - Mike Lawson presented the draft of the article proposal to amend the maximum building height in the Limited Business District #1 to 35 feet, consistent with height limits in other business districts. The district is a small commercial area located on Elm Street near Route 2, characterized by large parcels and no immediate residential abutters.
Committee voted to recommend favorable action on the article with one abstention.

Mike Lawson will present the draft article of the Planning Board on proposed Zoning changes for mixed use for a vote by the committee at the next meeting.

5. Tourism Division Report – Beth Williams reported on the division’s efforts to increase accessibility to visitor offerings. Kicking off series called “History Without Frostbite” which are seated lectures held at the Wright Tavern. Boxed lunch from local restaurant offered with the program. Focusing outreach on seniors. Is helping to stretch activities into shoulder season. Mark Martines asked about metrics of impact of tourism on economic vitality and if additional hotels would be helpful. Beth suggested boutique hotel are right scaled for Concord and beneficial to attract and retain visitors and meet the need for larger venues for events and meetings.
6. Goals Alignment – Mr. Lawson introduced document that draws together FY25 board, committee, and division goals. Discussion centered on interest to better align efforts across the three entities. For the next meeting, Mr Lawson seeks to have a committee review/report on its goals for this year and to begin the conversation for FY27 committee goals to suggest EV related goals for the Select Board. Mike Lawson and Mimi Graney will meet in the coming weeks to prepare for that committee conversation. Mark Martines asked about how the Black Heritage Trail Markers program impacts economic vitality and suggested the Concord Business Partnership as a group that might wish to hear a presentation on the project.
7. Economic Vitality Division Report – Mimi Graney reported on work related to coordination work related to installations in the public realm including the Black Heritage Trail Markers project, wayfinding for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, temporary sculpture for West Concord, Pride Crosswalks and Pianos on the Town from the Concord Conservatory. The Mass Cultural Council is amending guidelines for the cultural district program. Mimi and the chairs of the two cultural districts met with MCC staff to provide feedback on those changes. The implementation of the guidelines has been paused until 2027. Of benefit is the MCC’s leverage of the program to increase eligibility for other state funding via MOTT, MassDOT, etc. Mimi is developing an EV dashboard with a selection of metrics. She plans to present to EVC at next meeting for feedback.
8. Public Comment – Mary Hartman noted that four members of the committee have terms ending this spring. Mark Martines and Steve Verrill are ending their second terms and are ineligible for reappointment. Tom Wilson, though recently seated, was completing the term of an open seat and would need to be reappointed. The Clerk will be consulted to see if Beth Williams in seat seated for the Tourism Manager needs to formally renew her expiring term.
9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 4:30 at the Town House