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## Framingham's Town Meeting Invests in the Future

### Framingham Hosts Tour of Transit-Oriented Development Opportunities

On May 3rd, the Town of Framingham held an exclusive tour of Downtown Framingham for local real estate developers to explore the transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities there. Twenty developers took part in the tour, which provided them with an opportunity to see local properties located in

This year, members of the Town of Framingham's Town Meeting took another step in investing in the Town's future by voting to approve several critical infrastructure projects. Taken together, these votes highlight the Town's commitment to preserve Framingham's past while also laying a firm foundation for the future.

Among the most important steps Town Meeting members took was to approve the FY17 General Fund Capital Budget at \$12.5 million. As noted by the Town's Chief Financial Officer, the number of active infrastructure projects in Framingham is up 10 percent from last year's annual Town Meeting. The approved capital budget allows the Town to make longer-term investments that are critical to Framingham's future.

Major investments include:

- Annual roadway repairs - \$4.2 million
- Fire station & equipment upgrades - \$1.8 million
- Stapleton Elementary School improvements - \$1.4 million
- School Department Technology upgrades - \$1 million

Meeting members passed budget approvals for two other important projects:

- The designation of \$1 million raised from the Danforth Green housing development to support the restoration of the historic Athenaeum Hall located in Saxonville. Built in 1846, Athenaeum Hall is a historic structure that has served as everything from a hospital to a newsroom.
- Committing up to \$500,000 for the construction of Framingham's first skate park, located at Farm Pond. Last year, Town Meeting approved funds to approve the location and design for the skate park. Skate parks are growing in popularity in the Northeast, and are seen as an effective way of keeping young people active and engaged.

Separately, Town Meeting also approved \$31,000 in

Downtown available for development while also meeting local business and community leaders.



Framingham Town Manager Bob Halpin at real estate developer tour

The tour began at Framingham's Danforth Art Museum, where attendees heard from Robert Halpin, [Town Manager](#); Arthur Robert, Director of [Community and Economic Development](#); and local community and business leaders about the

advantages of living and working in Framingham. Guest speakers highlighted Downtown Framingham's background, recent zoning changes, downtown amenities and TOD opportunities.

"The new, enhanced Central Business District zoning is designed to encourage residential and mixed-use transit-oriented development around Framingham's commuter rail station, which is among the rail system's busiest," said Robert Halpin, Framingham's Town Manager. "This type of development will contribute to a dynamic, diverse, and walkable setting we know people are seeking in downtown area such as Framingham's."

Last October, Town Meeting members approved zoning changes to Framingham's Central Business District, with a goal of making Downtown Framingham a walkable, vibrant, and diverse center for the MetroWest region. Changes that were made allow for greater density, lessen the need for special permits, reduce parking requirements, and allow for more flexible uses.

"For over ten years, the Board of Selectmen has been committed to creating a vibrant and pedestrian friendly 21st Century Downtown for our community," said Laurie Lee, Clerk of Framingham's Board of Selectmen. "It's very exciting to see such enthusiastic interest in our downtown area and gratifying that the development community sees and supports the same wonderful potential for our future that we do."



Downtown Framingham after rezoning and transit-oriented development

"We are focused on making Downtown Framingham a hub for the MetroWest region," said Arthur Robert, Framingham's Director of Community and Economic Development. "Recent zoning changes and enhancements to the downtown area have changed the landscape for developers and residents alike. This tour allows us to showcase all that Framingham has to offer."

Attendees visited several TOD development parcels, all within a 10-minute walk to one of the MBTA Commuter Rail system's busiest stations. The tour began at the Danforth Art Museum and School and ended with a visit to Jack's Abby in

Community Development Block Grant funds to further support the project.

Framingham's Town Meeting closed on Tuesday, May 24th.

## Amazing Things at Framingham's Amazing Things Arts Center

Ellen Sturgis has been executive director of Framingham's Amazing Things Art Center for a little more than a year now, and in that time, she has indeed seen some amazing things herself. On the night that legendary blues guitarist BB King died, she saw guitarists Brooks Williams, Loren Barrigar and Mark Mazengarb perform a thrilling rendition of his blues classic "The Thrill is Gone." On her birthday, she saw world famous Scottish fiddler Alastair Fraser perform a charming set with Natalie Haas. And she celebrated the center's 10 year anniversary, in which the organization was able to thank all those who have made Amazing Things a success.

But among the most amazing things she has witnessed is the Town's new attitude towards Downtown Framingham. "The difference from when I was here several years ago is really dramatic. The Town is behind downtown revitalization, and we love being a part of it," said Sturgis.

So what's coming up next for Amazing Things? On June 3rd, the center will host [Liz Frame & the Kickers with Stefilia's Stone](#). A Massachusetts native, Frame presents "her own brand of rootsy Americana music. On June 10th, [Mark Zaleski Band](#) will perform while on June 17th and June 24th, the Center will host Boston's dynamic Celtic music ensemble [Fellswater with The Vox Hunters](#) and [The Rafters and Hummingbird Syndicate](#) respectively. Amazing Things will close out the month on June 25th with [Four Women: A Tribute to Nina Simone](#), which will include Framingham native Sympli Whitney.

Framingham, a local brewery and restaurant established in 2011 that recently expanded its presence in Framingham last year.

## FEATURED BUSINESS: Samiotes Consultants, Inc.

### Saxonville Company Sees Improvement for Historic Neighborhood

"Moving to Saxonville ended up being one of the best choices we ever made," says Despina Samiotes, Chief Executive Officer of [Samiotes Consultants, Inc.](#), a site development firm that provides civil engineering and land surveying services to a variety of clients both throughout New England and nationally. The company, founded in 1987, moved to Framingham from Wayland. The move provided ready access to Boston-area clients through close proximity to the Mass Pike and other major highways. The location also allowed the company to retain and attract talent to support their growth.

Initially located at the Saxonville Mills complex, where they occupied incubator space for a number of years, Samiotes Consultants has since moved to a new location on A Street, where they have seen firsthand the transformation that is taking place in the historic neighborhood. "The community is very supportive of local business," says Stephen Garvin, President of the company that employs more than 20 people. "But what we've really enjoyed is seeing the infrastructure improvements, keeping with Saxonville's historical significance, which the Town has invested in. We appreciate and respect seeing the Town reflect what we like to do, which is creating a more green, pedestrian friendly neighborhood."



3D Imaging of Framingham's Athenaeum

Samiotes Consultants provides a number of site development services for public and private sector clients throughout the country. Their clients include Harvard University, Groton School,

Phillips Academy of Andover, and Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School, among others. The company has also lent its services to public sector clients such as the police and fire departments in the Towns of Randolph, Hudson, and Needham. Closer to home, Samiotes Consultants, which likes to work with architects and landscape architects to provide great solutions, is part of the team looking at how preserve and expand the Athenaeum in Saxonville.

Outside of New England, Samiotes Consultants is providing civil engineering for the campus at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. Among the new tools the company is utilizing for numerous projects is 3D laser scanning, which allows them to capture building facades to accuracies to about an eighth of an inch. "It's the state of the art technology that we are using for multiple planning and design goals," Garvin says.

For more information on upcoming events and for tickets to these shows, please visit [Amazing Things Arts Center](#) Website.

Samiotes and Garvin note that the Town has supported area businesses throughout the construction of a new intersection and other infrastructure improvements. "The Town is very business friendly. They were really able to keep access to our business open through construction and worked with us to help preserve our parking. Town officials took an interest and were very supportive during this period," says Samiotes.

Framingham EDIC

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The Framingham Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) was established in 1995 to stimulate economic development and expand employment opportunities in the Town of Framingham in accordance with the town's approved economic development plans.

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