SO YOU WANT TO OPEN A RESTAURANT...

Collaboration between Health and Economic Development in the Town of Brookline
Topics to be Discussed

- Brookline snapshot
- Roles of Health Dept. and Economic Development Division
- Regulatory process for opening a restaurant
- Economic Development support, solutions and outcomes
SNAPSHOT

- 7 commercial areas
- ~148 restaurants
- ~93 liquor licenses
- 11 new applications in 2019
Role of the Health Department

- Responsible for the permitting of new food establishments
- Often the first point of contact for potential restaurant applicants
- Receives many inquiries about business processes/regulations that can be time-consuming to answer and outside the purview of the Department
  - In need of external support to help restaurant applicants navigate the regulatory process and find appropriate resources
Economic Development Division

- One of three divisions within the Planning Department
- Responsible for business support, long-term planning initiatives and a newly-formed sustainability office
- Acts as a liaison between businesses and Town departments
- Staff to the Economic Development Advisory Board
- Does not oversee regulatory functions but rather partners with departments to help support businesses that need to navigate regulations
Regulatory Overview

- An applicant looking to open a restaurant will have to follow a number of steps with a range of Town departments to secure the proper permits and approvals.
Regulatory Overview

- Select Board’s Office
  > Issues licenses
Regulatory Overview

- Select Board’s Office
  - Issues licenses
  - Food Vendor
  - Mobile Food Vendor
  - Common Victualler
  - Liquor
  - Entertainment
  - Outdoor Seating
Regulatory Overview

- **Select Board’s Office**
  - Issues licenses
    - Food Vendor
    - Mobile Food Vendor
    - Common Victualler
    - Liquor
    - Entertainment
    - Outdoor Seating
  - Public hearing is held
  - After approval, final walkthrough by the Building and Health Depts.
Regulatory Overview

- Building Department
  - Zoning requirements for business type, number of seats and parking spaces
  - May require Planning Board and ZBA approval
Regulatory Overview

- **Building Department**
  - Zoning requirements for business type, number of seats and parking spaces
  - May require Planning Board and ZBA approval
  - Building permits for interior and exterior construction
  - ADA and restroom requirements
  - On-site inspections during and after construction
Regulatory Overview

- **Health Department**
  - Responsible for issuing permits to food establishments
Regulatory Overview

- **Health Department**
  - Responsible for issuing permits to food establishments
  - Retail Food
  - Food Service Establishment
  - Catering
  - Limited Retail
  - Temporary Food
  - Special Event – Mass Gatherings
  - Mobile Food Facilities
Regulatory Overview

- **Health Department**
  - Responsible for issuing permits to food establishments
  - Residential kitchens
  - Required orientations with the Health Department prior to opening
  - Health Department makes recommendations to Select Board
  - Pre-operational inspections
Regulatory Overview

- Police Department
  > Provides recommendations to Select Board for issuance of licenses
Regulatory Overview

- **Police Department**
  > Provides recommendations to Select Board for issuance of licenses
  > Background checks for applicants and managers seeking a liquor license as well as mobile food vendors including ice cream truck drivers
Regulatory Overview

- Fire Department
  > public and structural safety
Regulatory Overview

- **Fire Department**
  - Public and structural safety
  - Cooking environment must be protected by an approved auto extinguishing or “Ansul” system
  - Cook hood duct system required
  - Free standing fire extinguishers required in specific locations
Regulatory Overview

- **Fire Department**
  - Public and structural safety
  - Establishments with 50 or more seats require an approved fire alarm system
Regulatory Overview

- **Fire Department**
  - Public and structural safety
  - Establishments with 50 or more seats require an approved fire alarm system
  - Exits must be kept clear and allow for emergency egress
  - Heat producing equipment such as boilers and water heaters must be kept clear
Regulatory Overview

- Planning Department
  - Sign & façade review process
  - Economic Development division
  - New business collaborations and support
  - How can we attract and retain restaurants by improving these complicated steps?
Current Collaborations

- Provide online guides and resources for business owners
- Work with Building Commissioner to promote flexibility in zoning to allow new business types
- Connect business owners with landlords and property owners who have vacancies
- Oversee sign/facade review applications – Façade Loans
- Zoning amendment to allow staff approval of some signage
- Worked with State Rep to receive additional liquor licenses and outreach to businesses to distribute
- Conduct exit interviews with recently-closed restaurants
- Promote restaurants at outdoor events
- Established café tables program in commercial areas with DPW
Proposed/Upcoming Collaborations

- Collaboration to incentivize food vendor pop-ups
- Possible warrant article to lower parking minimums in commercial districts near transit
- October workshop to explain local plastics ban and help businesses remain in compliance
- Select Board recently formed Small Business Development Committee to attract and promote new business types
- Work to improve and promote digital and print business resource guides and handouts
Outcomes and Successes

- Reduced wait time/delays for applicants at Health and all other Town departments to collect information
- Stimulation of new collaborations and discussions between Town departments
- Increased transparency and accessibility of Town processes and information
THANK YOU!

Q & A