

Town of Wethersfield
Economic Development & Improvement Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 9, 2006 - 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Chair Rosania called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.
2. Attendance - Members in attendance: Chair Betty Rosania, Chris Lyons, Kate Mullen, Joan Hughes, Howard Greenblatt, Doug Sacks, Ken Rizzio and Cindy Jacobs.

Members absent: Frank Frago, John Breglio, Tom Grottke, Joe Cornelio, Ralph Kelleher and Paul Montinieri.

Also in attendance: Andy Adil - Town Council, Phil Knecht - Planning and Zoning Commission, Peter Gillespie - Director of Economic Development/Town Planner and Denise Bradley - Assistant Planner.

3. Old Business

- a. Farmer's Market Status - Commissioner Hughes reported that she has submitted a list of markets and vendors to the Town Manager.
- b. Silas Deane Highway Plan - Peter Gillespie noted that a public meeting will be held on Monday, March 27th at 6:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall. Mr. Gillespie explained that Fuss & O'Neill would be presenting a final draft and that full reports would be made available one week prior to the meeting to review.
- c. RFP Marketing Assistance/Tourism Commission - Peter Gillespie reported that four (4) firms; Magee, Keiler, Andrea Obston and Anagnostics were interviewed during the last week in February. A second interview with Magee and Keiler was conducted on March 8th. Mr. Gillespie noted that the town may opt to unbundle the RFP and choose to work with both of the remaining firms with Magee working on the marketing aspect of the proposal and Keiler on public relations. Both firms have been asked to submit more detailed proposals.
- d. Wethersfield Offers Program - Peter Gillespie said that he would try to get the 1st ad proof to Wethersfield Life. He noted that the first ad would focus on the businesses in the Wethersfield Shopping Center and added that coordinating the effort was a challenge. Mr. Gillespie reported that a small size advertisement would cost \$260 and the larger size would cost about \$500. Chair Rosania commented that she would like to take out the larger size ad noting that there is money in the budget and the smaller ad would be barely legible. Commissioner Lyons noted that a smaller ad would not catch the reader's eye. Commissioner Sacks questioned whether the owner could defray the cost of the ad, as they would be the beneficiary. Commissioner Hughes made a motion to take out the larger size ad and to ask the owner to defray part of the cost. Commissioner Mullen seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- e. Display Board - Peter Gillespie reported that Commissioner Montinieri had been working on the final revisions. He noted that the board should be put into production within 3-4 weeks and completed before the 1st of the targeted Hartford Conferences, the Community Leadership International Conference on April 27th - 30th.
- f. March 15 Breakfast Seminar - Commissioner Lyons reported that 38 respondents had committed to attend the seminar. He noted that he does not yet have the small business turnout that the program was designed for. Mr. Lyons the asked the Commissioners to distribute the invitations to their clients, customers etc.
- g. STEAP - Peter Gillespie noted that the town is still in the running to receive its 2nd \$500,000 grant

and should be notified within the upcoming weeks.

- h. Budget 2005/2006 - Peter Gillespie reported that there is nearly \$15K remaining of non-earmarked funds. He noted that during a meeting of the Marketing Subcommittee, purchasing the \$4,500 wrap for the Double A Transportation Shuttle was discussed.

4. New Business

- a. Budget 2006/2007 - In reviewing the proposed budget, Peter Gillespie questioned whether the town's membership in the Metro Hartford Alliance, which costs \$5,500 per year, was beneficial and worth continuing. He noted that the budget hearing will be held on April 10th. Chair Rosania noted that she would like to see funding set aside for the Hartford Courant to be delivered to the Town Manager's Office daily.
- b. Double A Transportation Shuttle - Commissioner Rizzio motioned to appropriate \$4,500 for the graphic wrap for the bus and to solicit additional funding sources. Commissioner Sacks seconded and all voted in favor. Chair Rosania praised Commissioner Montinieri's efforts on this project. Commissioner Mullen suggested putting the responsibility of this project under the control of an EDIC subcommittee to monitor the frequency of usage etc. Peter Gillespie remarked that it would probably be best suited to be under the supervision of the Marketing Subcommittee and also noted that Commissioner Montinieri was interested in helping on the graphic design of the wrap. Chair Rosania asked if one of the Commissioners present would be willing to help Commissioner Montinieri. Commissioner Sacks responded that he would be willing to assist.

5. Reports of the Town Manager -

Town Manager's Report - Bonnie Therrien was not in attendance and no report was given.

Town Council Liaison's Report - Town Councilman Andy Adil reported on the following:

- o Receipt of the \$50,000 Preserve America Grant for the Historic Wethersfield Master Plan. He noted that the grant will be used to conduct a marketing study to analyze existing resources and develop strategies to increase usage of the town's historical and cultural resources.
- o Working with the Town Council to move forward in creating a Redevelopment Agency.
- o The Town Council's tour of the renovations to the town hall.
- o Positive results from the Fireside Chat with the Council and the Board of Education.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report - Phil Knecht reported on the Main Street Creamery application and the effort to revise the commercial vehicle regulations.

Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report - Peter Gillespie reported on highlights from the Economic Development Report.

6. Chairman's Report - Chair Rosania reported on the wayfinding signage meeting that took place on March 1st.

7. Sub-Committee Reports -

Finance - Commissioner Rizzio reported that three (3) loans are currently in the final stages of the closings. He noted that there is still \$12,500 in additional funds still available to non- Silas Deane Highway businesses. Mr. Rizzio also reported that a discussion ensued regarding the façade loan program. The program would closely mirror what is currently being offered in Rocky Hill and would hopefully be offered to the Silas Deane Highway businesses within the next few months. Peter Gillespie noted that the intent is to make the program a matching loan with a maximum of \$40K per applicant that would be forgiven over ten (10) years. Additionally, a list of contractors would be created, each project will be competitively bid and the Design Review Advisory Committee would review the applications for compliance with the Silas Deane Highway Master Plan. Commissioner Rizzio also noted that John Kupper, of Express Dental Lab located at 286 Silas

Deane Highway has voiced interest in participating in the tax incentive program. He noted that this is the first application received in the fourteen (14) months since the program was first initiated. A brief discussion ensued and the Commission expressed overwhelming support to accommodate Mr. Kupper's request for assistance at a level based on the recommendations of the Tax Assessor, the Town Manager and the Director of Planning and Economic Development.

8. Minutes- Approval of [February 2006 meeting minutes](#) - Commissioner Lyons motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Hughes seconded and all voted in favor.
9. Correspondence - The following correspondence was briefly reviewed:
 - a. Monthly Economic Development Report
 - b. Letter from Metro Hartford Alliance
 - c. Taste of Wethersfield Benefit
 - d. Letter to Thomas Grottke
10. Adjournment - Commissioner Mullen made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 P.M. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner