

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, February 10, 2005 - 12:00 p.m.**

**Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall**

#### **Members Present**

Chair, Betty Rosania, Joe Cornelio, Chris Lyons, Cindy Jacobs, Ken Rizzio, Doug Sacks, Howard Greenblatt, Kate Mullen, Vice Chair, Tom Grottke, Ralph Keleher. Also present were: Bonnie Therrien, Peter Gillespie, Andy Adil, Phil Knecht.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM by Chairperson Betty Rosania.

#### **Agenda Changes**

The Chair reminded the Commission that it was voted last meeting to reorganize the agenda order so more can participate in discussions.

#### **Old Business**

#### **Staffing**

The Council has charged the Town to increase economic development. The Town Manager suggested taking a motion to hire a full time Assistant Planner for Peter (because there will be a Council meeting on Tuesday the 22nd at 7 p.m.) It was decided to reassign the money to pay a half time secretary into the salary for the full time assistant.

Tom Grottke motioned to create a full time Assistant Planner position for the Town. Kate Mullen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

#### **Salute to Business - Business Survey**

Summary report was reviewed. It was decided that analysis and use of the survey should improve, including advertising the results. This could improve the image of the Town, its efforts and responsiveness to the business community. The chair suggested that a committee be formed to achieve these goals.

Kate Mullen moved to create the committee. Chris Lyons seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

Volunteers mentioned were Kate Mullen, Howard Greenblatt and Frank Frago.

#### **Quarterly Available Property List**

Joe Cornelius provided the summary handout. It was noted that Joe updates the list every 3-4 months. Unanimous compliments were expressed on a job well done. Mr. Gillespie mentioned that this list will be posted on the website and may develop a searchable database for the web. It will also be available in the Assessor's office and Town Planner's office. Town Manager Therrien suggested doing a press release to advertise the list, but will wait until the Town has a URL to put on the list.

#### **Bus Tour**

Goal of tour is to improve familiarity with properties and improved ability to be ambassadors for EDIC efforts. Phil

Knecht, Kate Mullen, Howard Greenblatt, and Betty Rosania expressed interest in the tour. The chair asked those interested to contact Town Manager Therrien to arrange a time for the tour. It was also agreed that a framed map of the town be hung up in the Town Manager's Conference Room.

### **New Business**

#### **Web Site**

Handout for website recommendations dated February 10, 2005 was distributed. Tom Grotke motioned to accept the recommendations. Doug Sachs seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

#### **Strategic Plan**

The committee met to provide recommendations from EDIC and they will be submitted to Peter Gillespie and Town Manager Therrien.

Highlights include:

1. Refocus Peter's title as Economic Development Manager
2. Follow through with staffing needed in Peter's office
3. Website improvements
4. Create a CD ROM to promote Wethersfield
5. Provide more money for the Tourism Commission that will in turn help EDIC achieve its goals.

#### **SHDAC -Status -RFQ**

Progress is being made. Workshop at the Police Station will be held in a couple of months. Some new business members have been recruited, which is a good sign. Current goals include the center island planting at the Northgate, and obtaining assistance from a design/engineering firm. Eleven responses to the RFQ were received. Interviews of the top 6 firms will be held on March 2nd for a half a day. Wethersfield has agreed to partner with Rocky Hill. Peter and Town Manager Therrien will discuss how to do this.

#### **Budget 2005/2006**

The Town Manager expressed urgency for EDIC to adopt a budget to request for the current budget being considered. Peter Gillespie mentioned that EDIC had already approved the additional full time assistant position for his office. It was suggested that money that has been used for brochures in the past could be put toward a CD ROM.

#### **Design Review Advisory Committee**

Peter Gillespie summarized. Appointments have been made and the committee has already been meeting. They are a very capable group. Bruce Bockstael was appointed as chairman. They plan to meet with other communities that have Design Review Advisory Committees.

### **Reports**

#### **Town Manager's Report**

- EDIC received full funding through the CIP program which includes 40K for the façade program, 25K for revitalization and 50K for the Silas Deane Highway revitalization.
- Want to get a PR campaign going to work on blighted properties.
- Developers Breakfast: Doug Sachs volunteered to do a press release about these. The next breakfast will be

March 16th at 8 a.m. at the Wethersfield Country Club

- Interest in getting more involved with activities at Adrian's Landing and the Regional Hartford area businesses.

### **Town Council Liaison's Report**

Andy Adil discussed the following topics: the need to provide Peter with an assistant, getting support for a development agency (have a referendum in the spring), the current anemic grand list that will improve as current projects are completed, and the need for more economic development.

### **Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report**

Phil Knecht reported that the last meeting was cancelled and 12 age restricted houses are planning to be built on Folly Brook. Both Phil and Town Manager Therrien made very positive comments about the new P&Z Commission.

### **Director of Planning and Economics Development's Report**

Information was already shared.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Rosania discussed the sale of the former Stop & Shop property at Wells Road.

Members expressed concern over intentions of this significant purchase. It was mentioned that they may intend to bulldoze. Peter stated that he will meet with the owner to inquire about their plans. Town Manager Therrien suggested that Peter be blunt and say that neighbors are not happy.

The chair reported that she has met with the mayor and he supports the EDIC efforts and programs.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Marketing and Communications**

Chris Lyons focused discussion on the Business Visitation Program. So far, volunteers have met 157 business owners face to face to answer the business survey questions, and 12 asked for a second visit. More volunteers are needed and kits are available in the Planning Office. This activity provides concrete evidence to the business community that EDIC exists.

#### **Financial Strategies**

Ken Rizzio reported that this subcommittee is meeting on Thursday the 17th at 4 p.m. to finalize the loan program to give to Council the first meeting in March.

#### **Development Initiatives**

Tom Grottke reported that the committee feels they need to discuss with Peter what his needs and goals are. Maybe this committee should reassess what the Development Committee should do. Tom Grottke asked whether the town should establish an agency to target this area.

#### **Correspondence**

#### **Meeting Minutes of January, 2005**

Kate Mullen motioned to accept [the minutes from January 2005](#). Cindy Jacobs seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

### **Greater Hartford Association of Realtors - February 17, 2005**

The Chair reminded the members of this meeting for those interested.

### **List of SDHAC RFQ responses**

### **Adjournment**

The chair adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Christine Paul