

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Economic Development and Improvement Commission acceptance.]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 10, 2005 - 12:10 p.m.

Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall

Members Present

Chair, Betty Rosania, Joe Cornelio, Howard Greenblatt, Kate Mullen, Joan Hughes. Late arrivals by: Ken Rizzio, Paul Montineri, Chris Lyons and Andy Adil

Also present were: Bonnie Therrien, Peter Gillespie, Phil Knecht, Charlie Forsdick and Christine Paul.

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 PM by Chairperson Betty Rosania.

Old Business

Staffing

Peter reported that the Council approved to hire a full time Assistant Planner. Several qualified candidates have applied, the deadline for applications is next Friday and they are expected to begin by the first or second week of May 2005. A special thanks to Andy Adil, Carmella Moore and Charlie Forsdick for lobbying for the assistant position. A committee will review the applicants. Any Commission members that would like to help in the review process are welcome and should contact Peter.

Salute to Business - Business Survey

Kate Mullen reported that the committee will be meeting March 21st to look at the Business Survey and Salute to Business event. A report will be available for the next Commission meeting.

Real Estate Breakfast - March 16

John Breglio was not present. Peter Gillespie reported that the March 16th event is cancelled, it will probably be held two weeks later, but the date is to be announced.

Loan Program

Ken Rizzio summarized. Last Monday the Council approved the Loan Program as well as the proposal to make the 25K CIP monies originally earmarked for the Silas Deane Highway available for other areas; given that we got the STEAP money. The next steps are to set a meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss marketing initiatives for the Loan Program and developing procedures to administer the Loan Program.

Mr. Gillespie mentioned that that would make the total available for the Loan Program to be 40K to start. However, we did ask for additional money from CIP for July 1st. There are some administrative aspects that need to be figured out. For example, technically there needs to be a closing on the loans, so the responsible parties have to be decided.

Town Manager Therrien mentioned that the maximum would be kept at 15K because that was what was submitted to

the Council. Peter Gillespie said that those interested now can contact him while the procedures are being worked out. Also, the Design Review Advisory Committee will be reviewing all applications. Plans are to get the word out about these monies by May.

New Business

Tourism Commission Report - Charlie Forsdick, Chairman

The chair welcomes and thanks Mr. Forsdick for coming; Mr. Forsdick returns the thanks. Mr. Forsdick reviewed the Tourism Commission's mission, accomplishments, current projects and future goals.

- Goals: 1. Demonstrate Wethersfield as a viable community to increase economic development. 2. Help people appreciate the historical assets here by advertising regionally and nationally.
- **Achievements:** Historic Wethersfield Brochure, seasonal calendar, greeter's manual, the web site that is linked to 14 web sites including one in Holland, and a promotional kit that goes to about 100 tour operators. A Kitchen Tour was developed and the first one will be run in about three months. Finally, a Marketing and Publicity Subcommittee was created.
- **Currently:** Working with the Greater Hartford Convention and Visitor Bureau, Rae Ann Plamer to look for grants, a partnering program with the Junior Woman's Club Annual Quilt show on March 15, 2005. Also, analyzing and developing updated signage for improved way-finding, hired a consultant to help with the Town Strategic Plan, the Rossenbeau sign, looking to use display ads instead of the seasonal calendars.
- **Future:** Working on: Christmas holiday event, a trolley for visitors, expanding brochure distribution, a cruise boat from Riverfront Recapture stopping at Old Wethersfield Cove when they get a second boat, hire a marketing consultant.
- **Sidenotes:** Chairman Forsdick suggested:
 1. Inviting Ben Sidell, the Managing Director of the Greater Hartford Convention Center Bureau to speak at the upcoming Economic Development Summit (he is looking for places people can go in the area when people come to Hartford).
 2. Building a permanent dock in the Wethersfield Cove for Riverfront Recapture cruise boats to use.
 3. Using the marketing company that created the Rising Star campaign for Hartford.

Feedback on Tourism Report by EDIC members

Work with other tours to have Wethersfield the first stop among several towns.

Tourism should cooperate with SDHAC to improve signage.

EDIC may want to use the same marketing professional that Tourism chooses.

Promo kits should get into Hartford sooner than later (Adrians Landing, hotels etc.).

Wondering what the Chamber of Commerce is doing to attract developers and others.

Working with Riverfront Recapture is a great idea.

SHDAC

Mr. Gillespie reported that six design firms were interviewed last week and is now narrowed down to two. Second interviews will be held on March 24 with revised proposals and scope. Once one is chosen, and after negotiations, costs should be available for the next EDIC meeting. Once EDIC is on board we can present the figures to the Council. This will be partly determined by STEAP money and the timing of that, which we hope to have by the next SDHAC meeting next Tuesday.

Budget 2005/2006

Town Manager Therrien reported that the budget is slightly worse than last year therefore any monies that can be applied for from CIP etc. would be helpful. Mr. Gillespie mentioned that EDIC budget is about the same as last year, the Grants position has been moved from the EDIC budget to the town manager's office, the secretarial position will not be in the budget, the Planner will be in the Planning budget.

Land Use Committees Quarterly Meeting March 23

Mr. Gillespie explained this meeting as a new initiative from the Town Manager for all land use boards and committees and Chamber to share information and discuss issues. The meeting will be at the Community Center at 6 p.m. Groups included will be Historic District, P&Z, SDHAC, ZBA, the Chamber of Commerce, EDIC, as well as the new Design Review Advisory Committee.

Reports

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Therrien lastly mentioned that the Town is continuing its efforts to find a suitable property to entice WFSB (CH 3) to move to Wethersfield. WFSB would like 5-6 acres with high visibility, easy RT 91 access, and possibly an area suitable for a helipad.

Town Council Liaison's Report

Andy Adil discussed the following topics:

- Council approved the Loan Program and the Assistant Planner position.
- Council wants to see Mr. Gillespie get full time secretarial staffing also.
- Council is enthusiastic about the work that is being done.
- Mr. Adil feels that a Development Agency should be formed, and should be discussed at the March 23rd Land Use Committees meeting.
- Mr. Adil welcomes new EDIC members.

Town Manager Therrien commented that EDIC is legally the Development Agency, so maybe there needs to be discussion about what that means.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report

Mr. Gillespie gave the report.

- State of the Town Breakfast will be Thurs. May 5th at 8 a.m. at the Wethersfield Country Club. Several speakers include Town Manager Therrien, and our State Senators and Representatives have been invited.
- February 28 article in the Hartford Business Journal about the Office Depot opening made some nice comments about the region and SDH.
- The March 16th Realtors Breakfast is cancelled and will notify of new date.

Director of Planning and Economics Development's Report

The chair complimented Mr. Gillespie's work and the obvious increase in economic development. Chair Rosania suggested that Mr. Gillespie note in minutes etc. whenever he provides his assistance in meetings to make his many activities more visible.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Rosania commented on the design firm search, the high caliber of responses, the many useful ideas the panel heard; and the Office Depot and Starbucks openings.

Sub-Committee Reports

Marketing and Communications

Chris Lyons gave the report.

- Realtor's Breakfast scheduled for March 16 is postponed.
- He is happy to see the recent articles about Wethersfield, like the one in the Hartford Business Journal.
- Paul and Mr. Gillespie have narrowed down ideas for the Web and the next stage is implementation. Mr. Gillespie commented that we have not used the money for this project yet and we should because it will not be available next year.
- Business visitation will get up and running in the spring. More volunteers are needed. Mr. Gillespie mentioned that a meeting for this would be good to distribute lists, give surveys and give 'marching orders'.
- Chair Rosania thanks Paul Montineri for his work cooperating with other groups.

Financial Strategies

Ken Rizzio reported that the next meeting time has yet to be scheduled. He has been in contact with Frank keeping him up to date by email.

Development Initiatives

Tom Grottke was not present.

Mr. Gillespie discussed the following topics: one of the original roles of SDHC was to advocate for new projects to help them get through the permit process, Dunkin Donuts will not be going into the Carvel location, the appraisal for Carvel is about 200K the proposed bill to limit the ability of municipalities to use eminent domain.

Town Manager Therrien mentioned: that Ocean State Job Lot will not be going in for at least seven years, keeping it vacant, so she will try to talk to the Ocean State Job Lot owners in Rhode Island, the eminent domain issue should be decided by June, we should probably get a house bill out concerning this, and the list of blighted properties should be out for the next meeting and would have to go to Council.

Meeting Minutes of January, 2005

The chair asked to entertain acceptance of [the February minutes](#) with the correction that Doug Sacks name has a k not an h. Kate Mullen motioned to accept the February 2005 minutes. Ken Rizzio seconded the motion, all members voted in favor.

Correspondence

Monthly Economic Development Report, February 2005

Already given

Article - Hartford Business Journal - Feb 28, Office Depot

Office Depot made some nice comments about the region and SDH.

CT Commission on Culture and Tourism Grant Application

Adjournment

Kate Mullen motioned to adjourn, Ken Rizzio seconded the motion, all voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Christine Paul