

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 12, 2005 - 12:00 p.m.

Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall

Members Present

Acting Chair, Tom Grottke, Joe Cornelio, Howard Greenblatt, Kate Mullen, Joan Hughes. Paul Montinieri, Chris Lyons, Cindy Jacobs, Doug Sachs, Ralph Keleher, Andy Adil, Ken Rizzio, and Frank Frago.

Also present were: Bonnie Therrien, Peter Gillespie, Julie Montinieri and Phil Knecht.

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 by acting Chair Tom Grottke.

Old Business

Loan Program

Ken Rizzio reported that the Committee needs to meet one more time to discuss how to distribute the information on the program and promote its availability.. Mr. Grottke suggested a general press release in a newspaper and a public posting for the general public. Mr. Rizzio stated that he plans on getting this information out to the public before June 1.

Culture and Tourism Partnership Grant

Mr. Gillespie reported that two grant s were applied for: 1) Assistance with the historical Wethersfield brochure and furthering distribution and 2) Assistance with the monies for way finding program. Tourism has agreed to put up the required matching cash of 6K.

Real Estate Breakfast - March 16

Chris Lyons reported that the breakfast was the third one held and it was well attended by over 20 including staff and the Mayor.

New Business

SDHAC - Recommendation - Design Consultant Selection

Mr. Gillespie summarized the selection process and stated that the Town has been negotiating a specific fee and scope of service for this contract. Mr. Gillespie distributed the latest fee proposal and scope. Mr. Gillespie reported that the Silas Deane Highway Committee had recommended Fuss and O'Neill. The fee to be shared between both communities is \$121,000. Mr. Grottke stated that it is important to negotiate the cost sharing with Rocky Hill. Mrs. Mullen motioned to recommend that the Town Manager is authorized to negotiate a contract with Fuss and O'Neill in an amount not to exceed The fee of \$121,000 detailed by Fuss and O'Neill. Mr. Frago seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Budget 2005/2006

Town Manager Therrien reported that the budget has been approved as a 7.5% tax increase and no layoffs or furloughs were included. Mrs. Therrien stated how tough a budget year it was. \$25,000 is included in the CIP budget for the Silas Deane Highway.

Mr. Grottke requested that Mr. Gillespie review the available budget balance and make arrangements to carry over the \$15,000 earmarked for the Loan Program.

State of the Town - May 5

Mrs Therrien stated that attendance was about 75 people with several new businesses represented. Additionally, Ms. Therrien reported that the Chamber Anniversary Dance was also a success raising several Thousand dollars for the scholarship program. Commission members were reminded about the Annual meeting to be held on Wednesday May 18.

STEAP

Mr. Gillespie mentioned that the first STEAP money will probably be available in early May for the landscape architect firm. The State is asking for a revised budget and design guidelines before STEAP money will be released for the Façade program. The design firm is the group that will be creating the guidelines, so money for the Façade program will probably not be available until the fall.

Reports

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Therrien mentioned three items:

1. The Town did not get the Brownfield Grant and will work with CRCOG on available funds.
2. Chuck Flynn is the new Fire Chief.
3. On May 23rd Town Staff and the Mayor will be going to New York to present to our bond rating agencies

Town Council Liaison's Report

Andy Adil discussed the difficult budget process and the need to expand the tax base in order to offset these increases. Councilor Adil also stated that our State delegation is pursuing additional funds for us particularly for Mill woods Park.

Mr. Grottke stressed the need to get the road improvements underway before the Fall.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report

Phil Knecht reported that the PZC is working on some minor changes to the regulations and discussed the improved relationship between the Commission and Developers. Mr. Gillespie noted that the Folly Brook age restricted project is working its way through the permit process and will be presented to the PZC on June 7. Kate Mullen and Ralph Kelleher will attend to support the project. Cindy Jacobs asked if any support could be given to the Main Street Creamery as they work out issues with the HDC.

Director of Planning and Economics Development's Report

Mr. Gillespie included the monthly update in the packet and highlighted a few recent activities such as: the reopening of the Main Street Creamery and Bob's Fruit on the Berlin Turnpike, Mercury Fuel on the Silas Deane, and Hallmark's Ice Cream on Main Street. Soon to be open Lasik Vision Plus, and Beazley Realty.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Rosania was absent and their was no report given.

Sub-Committee Reports

Marketing and Communications

Chris Lyons reported on the following:

Fam Tour - This event will be held on May 25 at the Tavern and all members are encouraged to sign up and attend. 50 Event Planners from the region will be exposed to what the Town has to offer. Mr. Sachs suggested a follow up needs to be thought about in order to insure the contacts are successful.

Realtors Breakfast - Planned for sometime in July.

Web Page - On hold until Assistant Planner is hired.

Marketing/Brand - An initial meeting was held with the Tourism Commission about utilizing the "Historic Wethersfield" logo as a consistent Town brand identity.

The Valley Book - Mrs Hughes stated that on May 19 an event is planned at the Tavern to release the 3 Town Valley Book. The book will be distributed to about 45,000 homes in the 3 Towns and all members are encouraged to attend.

Connecticut Life - Mr. Frago reported that Wethersfield was the featured Town of the month in Wethersfield Life.

Paul Montinieri stated that on June 2 at the convention center Riverfront Recapture has offered a booth to the Town.

Financial Strategies

Ken Rizzio reported on loan program. The goal is to have monies available by the end of May and also make this a permanent part of the budget. Marketing of the program still needs to be worked out.

Development Initiatives

Tom Grottke reported that the Committee has been meeting and has a meeting planned next Monday. Research has been performed on the Statutes and requirements for Municipal Development Plans. Mr. Grottke distributed a copy of an MDP from Bridgeport for informational purposes. The Committee will work closely with the SDHAC and their consultants on the output from the study and would like to have recommendations for Council in September. The Committee continues to look at development opportunities and is specifically analyzing property on the Silas Deane Highway. Mr. Grottke identified 6 areas that are being further investigated and the Commission members briefly discussed the merits of the sites.

Meeting Minutes of April 2005

Mr. Frago motioned to approve [the April minutes](#) with a modification that the minutes should indicate that Andy Adil was identified as being present twice, Kate Mullen seconded the motion and the vote showed all in favor.

Correspondence

Mr. Frago encouraged all members to attend the Chamber Annual meeting to be held on May 18 and noted that the Town Manager and Economic Development Manager were being given awards.

Adjournment

Mr. Grottke adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Peter D. Gillespie

Economic Development Manager/Town Planner