

## **TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the special meeting of September 25, 2003**

**Members present:** Tony Camilliere  
Frank Frago  
Tom Grottke  
Joan Hughes  
Cindy Jacobs  
Chris Lyons  
Ken Rizzio  
Betty Rosania  
Jon Vining

**Also present:** Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager  
Peter Gillespie, Dir., Planning & Economic Dev.  
Phil Knecht, Planning & Zoning liaison  
Joe Cornelio, resident  
Marie Massaro, P&ED, EDIC Secretary

Tom Grottke called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. He stated the sole purpose of the special meeting was to finalize the agenda for the October 15 economic development summit. He referred everyone to the draft agenda. Bonnie Therrien said the intent of part two on the agenda was to give representatives from each board, commission or committee a few minutes to give an overview of its goals as related to economic development. Tom asked if we should provide a five minute time limit; Betty suggested three minutes to allow more time for other parts of the agenda.

Peter Gillespie asked if anyone knew the status of STEAP, the Small Town Economic Assistance Program. Bonnie said she or Peter would confirm whether or not it's still an active committee. Peter also said he'd like to see the outcome of this summit be an agreement among all parties of the top 5-10 economic development priorities for the coming 12-24 months.

Tom turned discussion back to the first part of the agenda. Tony Camilliere stated he or Peter could present ground rules and objectives of the meeting, and asked if redevelopment should be a stated objective. Bonnie suggested this topic would arise on its own in the roundtable portion of the meeting. Betty Rosania said it should be spelled out up front; Tom said it could be noted in the opening that economic development in Wethersfield is by default redevelopment.

Frank Frago asked if all principals have been contacted; Peter said he will be meeting with each chair prior to the summit.

Betty stated that the relationship between the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee and the EDIC is unclear and needs to be resolved. Tony asked Bonnie to look into this; for now, Betty will continue to attend their meetings as the EDIC liaison.

Peter returned discussion to the opening part of the agenda, stating that after Tony's remarks, he would set the scope and tone of the meeting. Tony asked if the Historic Commission should be part of the committee group; Tom and Betty both agreed they need to be invited.

Cindy Jacobs mentioned that there's money available to small business owners for energy conservation; Tom suggested that be brought up when the group moves into specific strategies and tactics.

Jon Vining asked if we could invite people without adding them to the speaker list. Tom stated we need to be strict on time, balancing the need to keep focused with the need for public input. Bonnie stated that parts one and two of the agenda would take about one hour, leaving an hour for roundtable discussions and limited public comment.

Tom asked if the EDIC should list its High Wants/High Musts from the economic development plan. Tony thought it might take too long. Frank asked if three minutes for each committee was enough time; Tony said their meetings with Peter would help with focus. Bonnie suggested moving EDIC from the committee listing in part two, since it will cover its objectives in part one.

Betty mentioned the \$50,000 for the Silas Deane Revitalization Committee should be discussed. Tom noted that the \$50,000 was supposed to be part of a larger \$200,000 effort, but the State portion doesn't appear to be coming. He asked whether the lack of State funds should affect how or if our \$50K is spent. Bonnie noted this issue must be resolved and that the SDHRC was pursuing spending the money in the near term. The item will be placed on the next agenda.

Chris Lyons asked whether the Council would be represented by members of each party; Bonnie stated that the Council should select its appropriate representation, regardless of politics, as every other participating group is doing.

Tony said he'd like each EDIC member to have a visible role in the meeting. Frank Frago suggested that each subcommittee chairperson could say a few words. Tom reviewed the timeframes of the agenda; for part 4, he suggested each committee member facilitate a small group discussion. Peter suggested the small groups be formed based on our subcommittee structure so that their objectives naturally fall into our existing structure. Cindy asked if there should also be a group focused on promoting tourism and arts; Tom stated this would be part of the Marketing/Communication subcommittee.

Frank said EDIC members could act as moderators and report out at the end. Tom stated the reporting out would be part 5 of the agenda. Peter suggested EDIC members keep key points of the economic development strategic plan in mind, using them as launching points for discussion in the roundtable. Betty asked where in the agenda there would be input from the electorate; Bonnie stated the meeting agenda and results would be posted on the web site, and Peter noted that the final portion of the meeting would include an opportunity for the public to speak briefly.

Tony asked if we had appointed chairpersons for each subcommittee.

He read off names of current members and asked for volunteers to chair each subcommittee. The results were:

Development Initiatives: Chair - Tom Grottke; other members are Chris Lyons, Jon Vining, and Frank Frago. Phil Knecht will also take part.

Financial Strategies (tax incentives, grants, business improvements): Chair: Frank Frago; other members are Ken Rizzio, Tony Camilliere

Communications/Marketing: Chair: Chris Lyons; other members are Cindy Jacobs, Joan Hughes, John Breglio, Betty Rosania

Frank Frago asked if developers and real estate professionals would be involved. Peter said they would be part of the next steps that evolve from the summit. Tony stated he'd like to invite a major developer to an EDIC meeting to tell us what they're looking for, answer questions we get from the public.

Betty asked if we had cards or other materials that we leave behind from our business visitations; Peter said we currently have nothing and this is an immediate need. Bonnie suggested this be a focus of the Marketing and Communications subcommittee.

Ken Rizzio asked if there was any particular order for the presentations by the groups we've invited. He thought SDRC should immediately follow the EDIC presentation. Tony agreed and stated the Town Council should go last. The group agreed to the following order:

1. Silas Deane Revitalization Committee
2. Chamber of Commerce
3. Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association
4. Tourism Commission
5. Culture and Arts Committee
6. STEAP
7. Planning and Zoning
8. Town Council

Tony also asked for an EDIC member to take minutes for each subcommittee roundtable; Jon Vining will cover Development Initiatives, Marie Massaro will handle Finance, and Cindy Jacobs will handle Marketing/Communications. Bonnie asked for clarification on the starting time; it was agreed that a light meal would be served at 5:00 with the meeting beginning at about 5:30. The timeframes were agreed to be as follows:

- Part 1: 15 minutes - Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Part 2: 30 minutes - Presentations by boards, commissions, etc.
- Part 3: 10 minutes - Previous Economic Development Plans/Goals
- Part 4: 30 minutes - Roundtable Discussion
- Part 5: 5 minutes - Closing Remarks

Tony Camilliere made a motion to adjourn at 9:45. Betty moved the motion and Frank seconded.