

Minutes
Redevelopment Agency
Wednesday, February 6, 2008
5:00 pm - Town Hall Conference Room #1

1. **Call to Order** - Chairman Lee Kuckro called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. **Roll Call/Attendance** - Members in attendance: Lee Kuckro - Chair, Daniel Camilliere - Vice Chair, Joseph Soja, Paul Thompson, and Michael Zaleski. Also in attendance: Martin Walsh, Town Council Liaison; Ken Rizzio, EDIC Liaison; and Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Members absent: none.

3. **Public Comments** -

Dr. Ken Sokolowski, 79 Main Street - Mr. Sokolowski suggested that the executive session be placed last on the agenda, after the correspondence section. This way, the public can go home after the correspondence section and not miss anything, since the meeting would be effectively over for them at that point. Mr. Kuckro said that he would discuss with Mr. Gillespie whether the order of future agenda topics could be changed to accommodate Dr. Sokolowski's suggestion.

4. **Approval of Minutes** - [January 23, 2008 special meeting](#) - Mr. Kuckro asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes. Some typographical errors and date corrections were suggested and incorporated. Mr. Camilliere motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
5. **Public Information Forums** - Outline - Mr. Thompson distributed copies of his draft proposal for the public information forums, based on the discussion at previous Agency meetings. Mr. Thompson suggested that the Agency hold 2 meetings, one in May and one in June, each about 60 - 90 minutes long, and include expert speakers. The main topics would be: problem identification, understanding the tax base, what the town already does, and future solutions. Mr. Thompson said the meetings would be publicized as widely as possible to maximize citizen participation. Mr. Gillespie said he is looking into having the meetings videotaped for showing on the public access TV channel. The members discussed various formats and content. The consensus was to hold 2 different meetings, with the first focused on the problems, and the second focused on the solutions. Mr. Thompson asked the members to send to him their comments on the draft proposal so he can incorporate them in a redraft for the next meeting.

Mr. Soja said that he attended a State Department of Economic and Community Development meeting yesterday. The meeting topic was Local Economic Development Strategies. While there, he asked what the DECD does for public informational forums. He was told that the DECD would share with the Agency their outline for such forums, which typically includes: what is the vision for the future, quality of life, identifying 5, 10, 20 year goals, what investment is needed and what can be the expected return.

Mr. Soja also said that the DECD's main assistance tools are for brownfields redevelopment and funds for developers. Mr. Gillespie said the DECD's tools are not the best match for Wethersfield, since it does not have big problems with brownfields, and the DECD tends to pursue development projects larger than what would likely come together in Wethersfield. Mr. Soja said that representatives of DECD are available to attend meetings, and Mr. Kuckro suggested that it may be best to have DECD attend an Agency meeting rather than one of the public forums.

Mr. Kuckro said that he planned to attend a meeting on February 19th about tax incentives. He also distributed copies of the Market Assessment for the Silas Deane Corridor which was part of the Silas Deane Master Plan for members to review and glean ideas for expert speakers and content for the public forums.

Note: At 5:30 p.m., the Agency's meeting was moved out of Conference Room #1, to accommodate another meeting scheduled there. The Agency's meeting resumed at 5:32 p.m. in the Town staff lunchroom.

6. **Silas Deane Highway Overlay Zone Subcommittee Status** - Mr. Gillespie said that the next meeting is planned for February 15th at 8:30 a.m. in the Town Manager's Conference Room.
7. **Redevelopment Planning Process Time Line** - Mr. Gillespie distributed copies of a typical process timeline that he drafted, based on the State statute in Chapter 8, Section 125c. The timeline showed that the legal steps and estimated timeframes add up to approximately 5 months. That is, developing a plan takes about 2 months, going through public notice and approval takes about 1 month, and negotiations with developers usually take about 2 months.

Mr. Kuckro noted that there is a step in the State's generic process for relocation of families displaced by redevelopment. He said it would not apply in Wethersfield's case, as there would be no residences displaced by an action taken by the Agency. Mr. Kuckro also said that more than one redevelopment plan can be pursued at one time, and the second is usually easier to produce than the first because of familiarity with the process.

Mr. Gillespie handed out a redevelopment plan from Windsor. Windsor created a redevelopment agency specifically to redevelop an old factory into residential condominiums, called First Town Square. A key role for the Town was to help overcome the high start-up costs from environmental clean-up. The Town contributed \$800,000 for the estimated cost of clean-up. The eventual total clean-up cost was \$1.4 million. The developer was responsible for any additional costs, so he paid the difference of \$600,000. The Total project costs were \$10.9 million. All of the clean-up and bond funds were transacted through the redevelopment agency. This way, the town never owned the property, so it was insulated from that liability.

Mr. Gillespie said another step taken by the Town of Windsor was to create a list of priority sites for redevelopment. With approval from its town council, Windsor gave priority to these sites for façade improvements and other redevelopment programs and funds. He said that this and the First Town Square example could be presented at the public information forums as ways the Town can accomplish redevelopment without owning, holding or getting stuck with property.

8. **Executive Session To Discuss Real Estate Matters** - Mr. Camilliere motioned to go into executive session at 5:58 p.m. to discuss real estate matters. Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor. During the executive session, the Agency members discussed real estate matters, and no votes were taken. Mr. Camilliere motioned to come out of the executive session at 6:25 p.m. and return to the regular agenda, Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.
9. **Next Meeting Date** - February 20, 2008 at 5:00 pm. (regularly scheduled meeting). Mr. Gillespie said that he would look into the availability of a different room to avoid a scheduling conflict with other meetings.
10. **Correspondence** - none.
11. **Call to Adjourn** - Mr. Soja motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m., Mr. Zaleski seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Agency Recording Secretary