



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 5:30pm
Held Virtually via Zoom

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bob Crowther at 5:33pm. Commission members Ron Jodice, Tom Earl, and Charmaine Seavy were present. Ex officio member Heather Goetz (Board of Selectmen) was also present. Staff members in attendance included: Maria Capriola, Town Manager; and Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager. Also in attendance was Morgan Hilyard, Executive Director of the Granby-Simsbury Chamber of Commerce.

1) EDC Annual Report presentation summary

Mr. Crowther recapped the presentation that he gave to the Board of Selectmen at their November 14, 2022 meeting. He was pleased with the feedback from the Board, and thanked the committee members for their good work. He said that Board members specifically recognized the work of Mr. Jodice on the short-term rental ordinance, Mr. Earl's efforts with the Historical Society, and the work that Ms. Freeman and Ms. Seavy did on the marketing brochure.

2) Stakeholder and Liaison Updates

a) Main Street Partnership

Mr. Crowther reviewed the update that Ms. Nielsen sent by email. This included a note about the partnership between Main Street and The Whale/International Skating Center. There was a reception to officially welcome The Whale to Simsbury in November with the Board of Selectmen and local business leaders. Ms. Nielsen reported that there was a record-setting number of attendees for this year's Simsbury Celebrates event. She also reported that Main Street held the ground breaking for the Simsbury Center Apartments with the Lt. Governor a couple of months ago, and will be hosting their ribbon cutting and tours in the spring.

b) Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Hilyard reviewed the "support local" raffle that wrapped up in November, noting that there was great participation both from businesses as well as people purchasing tickets. She said that the Chamber is wrapping up their holiday toy drive, with 106 children adopted through the program. Ms. Hilyard said that she is presenting the Chamber's proposal for a tourism map to the Finance Sub-Committee on Thursday. She also reported a ribbon cutting for the Talcott Mountain Collaborative and Tower Ridge Disc Golf that will be held in January. Finally, Ms. Hilyard discussed a new monthly networking event that will be held the second Friday of the month in the afternoon.

c) Zoning

Mr. Jodice said that the focus has been on cannabis, and there has been no action from the Zoning Commission yet. The public hearing was continued to the January 4, 2023 meeting.

d) Design Review

None

e) Sustainability

Mr. Crowther said that there was no Sustainable CT application submission this year, and that the application will be submitted in 2023. He said that the focus of the Clean Energy Task Force/Sustainability in the short-term has been driving clean energy initiatives and finding ways to integrate clean energy initiatives into Town projects.

f) DEI Council

Update provided by Mr. Earl by email, due to technical difficulties during the meeting.

Mr. Earl attended the presentation on November 14, 2022 titled “Pathway to Affordable and Inclusive Housing in Simsbury,” which was set up by the DEI Council. He reported that there were three presenters who spoke to the following themes: state of housing in CT with data sets focused on Simsbury; housing myths, realities and obstacles; and planning and financing affordable housing projects. His notes from the presentation reflect the following:

- In order to be a more inclusive community housing opportunities have to be there for everyone.
- In Simsbury, 5% of housing is subsidized. This is typical of suburbs that surround Hartford. In Hartford, 40% of housing is subsidized.
- Two other presenters represented for-profit companies that build and/or manage subsidized housing in CT. He said that this was very informative and educational.

g) Development Projects

None

h) Historical Society Support

Update provided by Mr. Earl by email, due to technical difficulties during the meeting.

Mr. Earl met with the Historical Society about two months ago at their yearly strategic planning session, at which they decided to establish subgroups and continue the planning. He will check in with them in January to see how far along they are and if they need assistance from the EDC.

i) Other

None

3) 2022-2023 EDC Work Plan Update

Mr. Crowther said that he is working with Tom Fitzgerald to schedule the 2023 business outreach visits. He noted that the First Selectman would like to be included in the visits, so all EDC members, Ms. Goetz, and First Selectman Wendy Mackstutis will be notified of the scheduled visits.

Mr. Crowther said that he and Ms. Meckel would be working on the business welcome packet. In regards to the marketing project, and the next step of developing themes, Ms. Seavy noted that Sarah Nielsen is off until January 9 so the project would pick up again after that. Mr. Crowther said that Mr. Earl will continue to serve as a technical resource to the Historical Society and other non-profits.

In regards to the website updates, Mr. Crowther noted that this will be an ongoing, long-term project. Mr. Jodice said that the website should include business resources that are specific to Simsbury. Ms. Goetz agreed, and noted that the Doing Business in Simsbury guide is outdated. Ms. Hilyard said that the Chamber had proposed to update that document, and is still willing to manage or assist with the revamp of that project. Discussion ensued regarding the most effective way to present and distribute the information in the guide, as this should be a partnership between the Library Business Resource Center, Chamber, and Main Street.

Mr. Jodice asked about the status of the co-working website; Mr. Crowther said that the project is still in need of a funding source.

4) Housekeeping Items

a) Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Survey

Mr. Crowther said that this survey is part of an update to the 2017 Plan. He encouraged members to participate in the survey and to distribute to others.

5) Minutes from October 26, 2022 meeting

Mr. Jodice clarified under item 5(h) that he not only spoke with Bob Moody, but also conducted a tour of the Historical Society to review their capital needs. With that amendment, Mr. Jodice made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Crowther seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager