



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

5:30 pm

Program Room 2, Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

- 1) Guest Speaker: Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director, Main Street Partnership
- 2) EDC Work Plan
 - a) Update from work streams/teams
 - Business Incentives
 - Strategic Vision
 - Business Recruitment, Retention and Outreach
 - i. Top Taxpayers in Town
 - Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing
- 3) Housekeeping Items
 - a) Potential Topics/Guest Speakers
 - b) Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee
 - c) Reports/Updates to and from EDC, Planning, Zoning, and Board of Selectmen liaisons
- 4) Minutes
 - a) December 27, 2018

Adjournment

Economic Development Commission Topic Area 3

Business Recruitment, Retention & Outreach

Draft

BOARD OF SELECTMEN IDEA:

DEVELOP A RESPONSE PROTOCOL WHEN A BUSINESS EXPRESSES A CONCERN ABOUT DOING BUSINESS WITH THE TOWN;
DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO CONDUCT BUSINESS VISITATIONS
DEVELOP AND TRACK FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM BUSINESSES

1. DEVELOP A FORMALIZED BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM INCLUDING WHO ATTENDS, FREQUENCY, WHAT'S DISCUSSED, AND HOW FINDINGS ARE DOCUMENTED

Company	Who Attends	Frequency	Discussion Topics
Top 10-15 Businesses based on Tax Revenue	Create teams of 2-3 from Town Mgr., First Selectman, EDC lead, MSP lead, Chamber Lead to cover 2-3 businesses per team	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you like about doing business in Simsbury?• What improvements need to be made?• How can the Town Government help grow your business?• Introduce Town Partnership Executive Point of Contact
Next 10-15 Businesses based on Tax Revenues	Create teams of 2-3 from BOS, EDC Reps, MSP & Chamber to cover 3 businesses per team	Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you like about doing business in Simsbury?• What improvements need to be made?• How can the Town Government help grow your business?
Remaining Businesses	Town Mgr., MSP, Chamber, BOS, EDC Reps	Every 6 months	Roundtable with rotated 10--15 business owners. Review same discussion topics.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN IDEA (CONT)

DEVELOP A RESPONSE PROTOCOL WHEN A BUSINESS EXPRESSES A CONCERN ABOUT DOING BUSINESS WITH THE TOWN;
DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO CONDUCT BUSINESS VISITATIONS
DEVELOP AND TRACK FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM BUSINESSES

2. RECOMMEND A TOOL FOR TRACKING OF AND RESPONSES TO BUSINESS FEEDBACK

- WORK WITH TOWN IT DEPARTMENT TO CREATE A DATA BASE TO CAPTURE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK
- USE THE TOOL TO ANALYZE THE DATA, IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, AND CREATE PROGRAMS THAT WILL ADDRESS ISSUES & CONCERNS
- ASSIGN OWNERS TO EACH PROGRAM TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS
- TRACK THE RESULTS
- USE FUTURE MEETINGS WITH THE CUSTOMERS TO DISCUSS PROGRESS ON EACH PROGRAM

3. DEVELOP A SURVEY THAT WILL SERVE AS AN EXIT INTERVIEW FOR BUSINESSES WHO LEAVE SIMSBURY AND DETERMINE HOW SURVEY RESPONSES WILL BE AGGREGATED AND TRACKED

KEY QUESTIONS:

- WHAT FACTORS LEAD TO THE DECISION TO LEAVE SIMSBURY?
- WHAT COULD THE TOWN GOVERNMENT HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO RETAIN YOUR BUSINESS IN SIMSBURY?
- WHAT ADDITIONAL CHANGES ARE REQUIRED TO ATTRACT / RETAIN BUSINESSES?

NOTE: USE THE IT TOOL TO TRACK ISSUES & CONCERNS, AND INTEGRATE WITH OTHER PROGRAMS TO ENSURE WE ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS

4. DEVELOP A PROCESS THAT ENSURES OUR TOWN GOVERNMENT REACHES OUT TO AND STAYS CLOSE TO OUR 10-15 HIGHEST TAX PAYING BUSINESSES

- IDENTIFY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE CONTACT FROM THE TOWN ATTENDEES LIST
- RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY EXECUTIVE / BUSINESS OWNER

Draft

Discussion points – Business Recruitment, Retention & Outreach process

- What is the right # of businesses in the Top Tier?
- Who should attend meetings?
- Who amongst the Board, MSP, CofC has existing relationships that should be leveraged?
- Do we want to have an individual be that key, single point of contact, or should the default be the Town Manager for all Top Tier accounts? (i.e. as a Business Owner, when I have an issue with the Town, who do I call?)
- How often should we meet?
- Should we have a 3-tiered structure, or would 2-tiers be OK, i.e. eliminate the middle tier?
- If we implement a “Round Table” series of meetings, what is the right number of businesses to invite? Frequency? Attendees?
 - How many total # of businesses do we have in Simsbury today?
- What is the best way to capture, analyze and process the information, i.e Excel?
- Who can we work with within the Town IT Department to set this up?
- What additional changes should we make to the Process? i.e. Anything else we are missing here??

Notes from Main Street Partnership Board Meeting – January 17, 2019

- **John Hampton Q&A**

- On \$15 / hr Minimum Wage proposal

- The business owners operate family-owned companies and are already challenged in doing business in a high “cost of living” state and town like Simsbury.
- Many struggle just to keep up with rising health insurance costs, workers comp insurance costs and other increases in the cost of doing business, i.e. higher utility costs, higher prices for goods, taxes
- To mandate a \$15 / hr. minimum wage will force many into difficult decisions of firing full time employees and potentially hiring them back as part-time employees with lower costs and lower “burden” costs, or letting them go. This would have an impact on customer service and will only drive their prices higher for consumers.
- In addition, fewer \$\$ would be available to “give back” to community programs and other charitable opportunities
- A suggestion was made to make any Minimum Wage increase age-related such that any new, young employee would start at a lower wage and only mandate the \$15/ hr wage to someone in their mid-twenties. As many already pay full time employees a competitive wage, this would help in managing costs for the lower skilled jobs (i.e. baggers at a grocery store).

- On the Family Medical Leave proposal

- The same issues apply. This would be another increase in one’s cost of doing business so not supportive without more details. In its current form, one could go on paternity leave and the company would continue to pay the salary of that individual while out on leave.
- The definition of one’s “Family” is also important. By current definition, it could mean all of one’s employees (i.e. Steve Antonio’s staff).

- Tolls

- Find a way so that it does not impact CT Drivers so that it does not feel like a “Tax” on them

- Note: John mentioned that he would be willing to meet with us to discuss what State programs could be helpful for the the Town

- Contact Information: john.hampton@cga.ct.gov
- (860) 240-8585

Additional General Comments

- Property Taxes
 - Many expressed concerns with the increases in their Property Taxes to the Town. This is another Cost of Doing Business in Simsbury, and owners only see this increasing over time.
 - The issue was more in the % of increase year over year. Appeals have not been successful.
- EDC Involvement
 - Find a way to get input from all of the business owners. The Owners do not feel that the Town is engaged with them enough.
 - To attract any new business to Town, the existing companies need to be happy in doing business in Simsbury.
- Anita Mielert comment:
 - Understand that the best opportunity for growth within the Town is through existing companies to grow their businesses vs trying to attract new companies to Town.

Update to Economic Development Commission on Business Incentives January 23, 2019

Current State:

- Incentive authority is Connecticut General Statutes.
- Incentives directly tied to physical structures, i.e. buildings or leasehold improvements
 - Tax Abatement
 - Infrastructure Rebate
 - Permitting Fees
- Assumes businesses have a physical location
- Process is managed by the Business Development Committee

Premise

- Business incentives should not just be about physical space
- Many other incentives are out there; grants, investment, assistance.

Plan of Action:

1. Research history of current incentives: Successes/Failures
2. Ensure we have our legal house in order
 - A. PVL check with M. Capriola
3. Determine what is available beyond current incentives and what has worked:
 - a. Engage State of Connecticut for additional options, e.g.
 - 1) Connecticut Innovations/CTNext
 - 2) Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
 - 3) SBIR
 - a. Engage private sector for what has worked and what is desired, e.g.
 - 1) Metro Hartford Alliance
 - 2) Simsbury Bank
 - 3) Simsbury Businesses
 - a) First: Simsbury Main Street Partnership
 - b) Ensure collaboration with other workstreams, i.e. avoid redundant effort
4. After survey of current efforts
 - a. Develop a collaborative approach with EDC and stakeholders to bring new businesses
 - 1) What incentives should be offered, and by whom?
 - 2) Target companies/industries as identified by other working groups
 - a) PVL develop list of high tech and manufacturing companies in Simsbury per Board of Selectman direction
 - 3) Determine what partnerships with other state organizations and private sector are to be pursued and implemented, and at what timeline.



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting
Minutes - DRAFT

Thursday, December 27, 2018 at 5:30pm
Main Meeting Room, Simsbury Town Hall – 933 Hopmeadow Street

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:35pm. Commission members Peter Van Loon, Bill Freeman, Brooke Freeman, and Carrie Meckel were present. Ex officio members Eric Wellman (Board of Selectmen) and Bill Rice (Planning Commission) were also present. Staff members in attendance included Town Manager Maria Capriola, Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby, Director of Planning and Community Development Mike Glidden, and Assistant Town Planner Robin Newton. Guest in attendance included Lisa Gray, Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce.

1) Guest Speakers: Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development & Robin Newton, Assistant Town Planner, *Review of Land Use and Permitting Processes*

Mr. Crowther explained that the Commission will hear presentations from various departments and groups over the next several meetings in order to become educated on Town operations and services. The first presentation will be an introduction from the Planning and Community Development department.

Mr. Glidden and Ms. Newton gave a presentation entitled “Land Development: Overview of Commission and Staff Roles.” This presentation included several topics, including an overview of the land use commissions, land use applications, relevant state statutes and timelines, public hearings versus administrative hearings, the post-approval permitting process, and the development process (i.e. inspection and monitoring).

Mr. Crowther asked whether staff envisions a role for the EDC in this process; staff indicated that it would be helpful to have the Commission review current processes and make recommendations for improvements.

2) EDC Work Plan

a) Assignment of work streams/teams

Mr. Crowther described his vision for developing the EDC work plan. This includes assigning two members to each of the four topic areas, with one member to be assigned as the primary lead. Each team will develop a plan for each topic area, which will be presented to the full commission. Mr. Crowther provided a sample draft related to business recruitment, retention, and outreach. The commission members agreed, by consensus, on the following assignments:

- *Business incentives* - Peter Van Loon (lead); Carrie Meckel; Maria Capriola (staff)
- *Strategic vision* - Ron Jodice (lead); Bob Crowther; Melissa Appleby (staff)
- *Business recruitment, retention, and outreach* - Bob Crowther (lead); Carrie Meckel; Mike Glidden (staff)
- *Support entrepreneurs/marketing* - Brooke Freeman (lead); Bill Freeman; Sarah Nielsen (staff)

Ms. Capriola noted that the work conducted by these smaller teams will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act requirements. The staff members assigned to each team can provide support with filing agendas and minutes, and facilitating the exchange of information through email in compliance with FOIA.

3) Housekeeping Items

a) 2019 Regular Meeting Schedule Update

Ms. Capriola noted that the December meeting was changed from the fourth Wednesday to the third Wednesday due to the Christmas holiday. In addition, the location of all regular meetings was moved to the Simsbury Public Library (Program Room 2) due to another commission being scheduled to meet on the same dates at 7:00pm in the Main Meeting Room.

b) Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee

Mr. Crowther told the commission that he met with this group to discuss the new EDC and provide an update on the work plan. This committee meets the second Tuesday of every month, and Mr. Crowther plans to continue attending. He will also attend the Main Street Partnership meetings. He encouraged other members to attend these meetings if they are interested and available.

c) Reports/Updates to and from EDC, Planning, Zoning, and Board of Selectmen Liaisons

Mr. Van Loon said that the Business Development Committee is expecting a new application shortly. Mr. Rice said that the Planning Commission has updated and streamlined its subdivision regulations, and that the changes will go into effect on January 8, 2019.

4) Communications

a) Memo from M. Capriola to BOS, re: EDC Update, dated December 12, 2018

b) Memo from M. Capriola to M. Glidden, re: EDC Liaisons, dated December 11, 2018

Mr. Wellman noted that while liaisons are not expected to attend every meeting of the board or commission that they are assigned to, they should be generally aware of the activity going on and the work being conducted by the board or commission. He recommended that liaisons sign up to receive the relevant board or commission's agendas and minutes.

5) Minutes

a) November 27, 2018

Mr. Van Loon noted that his last name was spelled incorrectly throughout the document. With that noted change, Mr. Van Loon made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Meckel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to adjourn at 6:45pm. Ms. Meckel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager