

TOWN OF SIMSBURY - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
“SUBJECT TO APPROVAL”
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - AUGUST 10, 2017

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CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission was called to order at 7:32 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices, 933 Hopmeadow Street. Present were: Chair Kristen Barnett and Commissioners David Balboni, Jay Devivo, Maura Fitzgerald and Thomas Frank. Absent were Vice Chair David Moore, and Evelyn Golden. Thomas Cooke, Director of Administrative Services and Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, were also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairwoman Barnett moved to approve the Minutes from the July 13, 2017 meeting. Mr. Frank seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

UPDATE FROM THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN’S OFFICE - TOM COOKE

Sarah Nielsen has been working closely with Town staff to develop a parking and use agreement for the parking behind Eno Memorial Hall and Fiddler’s Green. Ms. Nielsen added that there is already a verbal, shared-parking agreement in place between some of the area businesses. The Town becomes involved in this because Eno Hall is a Town property. A final memorandum is close to being done. It will be presented to the Board of Selectmen on Monday night. If all goes well, this can be a model that can be used throughout the downtown and elsewhere. Ms. Nielsen also added that this will benefit the Town of Simsbury because it will codify some of the agreements that have existed for decades. Signage and maintenance issues will be addressed as well.

Mr. Cooke updated the Commission on the Deepwater Wind petition, noting that the Town was granted Party status. The Board of Selectmen received very good reports from the boards and commissions regarding the project. This has allowed them to develop some in-depth interrogatories. He reminded commissioners about the Public Hearing set for September 12th at Eno Hall. Commissioner Frank read part of the letter from Dianne Treacy, an abutter, which was forwarded to the Commission members. Mr. Frank noted that her concerns underscore the absolute need for a strategic plan, adding that the Commission has never put together a review of the inventory of developable land. Chairwoman Barnett said the most-recent list was done two years ago. Mr. Frank suggested that there be another discussion on this subject. There was discussion about the tax revenue generated from this area. Mr. Cooke said that the Planning Commission reported that the project goes against the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). He said the Town has retained an engineer to help with the environmental side. Discussion followed regarding whether or not to have a special meeting to finalize the Commission’s recommendation on this project. It was decided that the subject will be further discussed at the next regular meeting.

REVIEW OF NEDC DRAFT REPORT TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Chairwoman Barnett began the discussion by thanking Commissioner Frank for all of his hard work on this report. Commissioner Devivo had some comments with respect to the Targeted Sectors section of the report, noting that he didn’t necessarily agree with all of those listed in sections a through d, specifically retail. After general discussion, it was decided to eliminate sections a through d and to change the word “would” in line two of Number 4 to “could” or “might.” Chairwoman Barnett summarized the changes to read something along the lines of focusing on target sectors consistent with the economic strategic plan of development that is done between the new NEDC and Board of Selectmen.

Chairwoman Barnett made a motion to reword Section 4 using the above-mentioned language and to eliminate points a through d. Mr. Frank seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

With those changes made, Mr. Frank made a motion to present the report to the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Fitzgerald seconded the motion. All were in favor except Mr. Balboni, who abstained. The motion passed.

DISCUSSION OF EDC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr. Frank commented that one of his ideas is to first engage in a listening session involving seeking views from certain other boards and commissions on developing economic development strategies. He also suggested including an online Town study. Chairwoman Barnett noted that data has been already collected by the Planning Commission which would be helpful. She added that it would be important to have a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and the Main Street Partnership. Mr. Cooke noted that the EDC has the opportunity to discuss this initiative with the Board of Selectmen at the September 11th meeting when the NEDC Report is submitted. Chairwoman Barnett will present it at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Devivo to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fitzgerald. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk