

TOWN OF SIMSBURY - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

“SUBJECT TO APPROVAL”

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 14, 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, Vice Chair David Moore and Commissioners David Balboni, Jay Devivo, Thomas Frank and Evelyn Golden. Absent were Mark Brady and Maura Fitzgerald. Thomas Cooke, Director of Administrative Services and Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, were also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Frank moved to approve the Minutes from the August 10, 2017 meeting. Mr. Devivo seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

UPDATE FROM THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN’S OFFICE - TOM COOKE

There was discussion at the CIRMA meeting regarding the State Budget. While no consensus has been reached as of now, there is a lot of pressure to pass the budget by October 1st because things start to go terribly wrong for a lot of towns if they don’t get some money by then. A big concern is the lack of detail.

The fact that a State Budget has not been passed yet is the biggest economic development issue we face at this time.

Regarding the Deepwater Wind project, the Board of Selectmen took a position based on the feedback it received from all of the Boards and Commissions. This was an enormously helpful exercise. The responses were thoughtful, balanced and well-informed. Based on this feedback, the Board of Selectmen took the position that the project is not ready and should not be approved in its current form. The hearing will be continued on October 10th.

The Silverman Group is planning to break ground in two to four weeks. Chairwoman Barnett noted that this project is very impressive and will be a very large addition to the tax rolls. She thanked them for their investment in the community.

Another positive development was the sale of the Ensign House to the Scullys.

Focus groups and a public hearing will be held on September 25th to gain input from the community and the Boards and Commissions on the recruitment of the new Town Manager. Chairwoman Barnett noted that she and Commissioner Frank will be attending on behalf of this Commission and Vice Chair Moore will be attending on behalf of the Ethics Commission. Discussion ensued about the inclusion of economic development in the Town Manager’s position. Commissioner Frank expressed concern that the current Economic Development Commission make a very strong statement on this before the November election. Mr. Cooke added that a statement from this Commission would be welcomed. There was further discussion regarding the new form of government, who will be responsible for economic development and concern about economic development being a focus of the new government. Chairwoman Barnett asked that comments be sent to Mr. Cooke and she will then compile them with the Commission’s proposal, which she will read in public audience at the First Selectman’s meeting.

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Chairwoman Barnett noted there are several new businesses to welcome to Town. Sarah Nielsen spoke about them, including Storyteller’s Cottage, an event space opened by the owners of Fiddler’s Green, focused on books, book events and authors. Another new business, Hello Lovely, had a ribbon cutting in the Maple Tree Plaza. There will be an expansion of People’s Choice at the Iron Horse Pub. And Remax has moved to the former Yunan Accents location.

UPDATE ON NEDC PRESENTATION TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Chairwoman Barnett spoke and received some feedback, including the recommendation that an Economic Development Commission liaison to other boards would be effective instead of the EDC Task Force. Also, Selectwoman Heavner thanked the Commission for its input. They were pleased with it and appreciated the thoughtfulness and research that went into it. Vice Chair Moore added that all six members were individually appreciative of the effort. Mr. Cooke noted that this Commission has positioned the next Board of Selectman to make some very thoughtful positions to move forward.

DISCUSSION OF MEETING AGENDAS FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

At the October meeting the Commission will finalize the draft letter with recommendations for the new Board of Selectmen. Thoughts about the November agenda can be considered at the October meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice Chair Moore to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Frank. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk