

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission was called to order at 7:30 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices, 933 Hopmeadow Street. Present were: Chair Kris Barnett, Vice Chair Dave Moore and Commissioners Evelyn Golden, David Balboni, Thomas Frank, Jay Devivo and Maura Fitzgerald. Thomas Cooke, Director of Administrative Services, James Rabbitt, Director of Planning and Community Development and Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, were also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no changes to the April 13, 2017 Minutes as filed.

UPDATE FROM THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN’S OFFICE – TOM COOKE

Mr. Cooke provided information on the Simsbury Events website which is being hosted by Simsbury Main Street Partnership. He alerted the Commission to an Open Meeting at Henry James Memorial School which is being sponsored by Deepwater Wind to discuss its proposed solar project for the Town of Simsbury. He also discussed actions being taken to finalize the Town of Simsbury budget in the absence of either a state budget or any reliable indication of what costs the state may pass on to municipalities.

UPDATE ON PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT FROM JAMIE RABBITT

Mr. Rabbitt explained the timeline for revising the Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD”) and the statutory deadlines faced by the Planning Commission. Discussion ensued concerning the scope and level of detail of the POCD, the role of the future Economic Development Commission, and remaining opportunities for the Economic Development Commission to share their objectives with the Planning Commission.

DISCUSSION OF FIRST SELECTMAN/SELECTWOMAN’S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION BY THE COMMISSION TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGARDING THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF FIRST SELECTWOMAN/SELECTMAN

Commissioner Frank stressed the importance of clarifying the economic development responsibilities of the First Selectwoman/Selectman and the Town Manager, noting that the current draft of the Town Manager job description made almost no mention of economic development. Mr. Cooke explained that as part of the recruitment process for Town Manager, there will be ample opportunity for input from the Economic Development Commission, the public, and others concerning the appropriate scope of the Town Manager’s responsibilities and that the Town Manager job description would not be finalized until a significant amount of input had been received. Mr. Cooke noted that he is on the Search Committee and that he would make sure the EDC had an opportunity for input. Chairwoman Barnett explained to the newer Commissioners that a survey had previously been sent to all Board and Commission members.

DISCUSSION OF THE “NEW” ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Frank presented a document entitled “NECD Plan of Organization and Resource Requirements” and reviewed its contents. Discussion ensued concerning the duties and responsibilities of the new Economic Development Commission (“NEDC”) and recommendations were entertained to add responsibilities for advocacy on economic issues of importance to the town and a requirement to collaborate with other agencies.

Commissioner Frank made a motion to modify the duties and responsibilities document previously approved on April 13, 2017 by the Economic Development Commission to include responsibility for advocacy on economic issues of importance to the town and to include a requirement for inter-agency cooperation. Commissioner Fitzgerald seconded the motion and it passed with Commissioner Balboni abstaining.

Recommendations were also made to add unaffiliated representatives to the NEDC in addition to democrats and republicans, to modify the duties and responsibilities to reflect that the development of an economic development strategic plan would be conducted in partnership with the Board of Selectmen, and that the frequency of meetings of the NEDC should be increased to two times per month.

Commissioner Frank made a motion to add language to the “NEDC Plan of Organization and Resource Requirements” to modify the duties and responsibilities to reflect that the development of an economic development strategic plan would be presented to the Board of Selectmen and be prepared in collaboration with Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen, that unaffiliated members be included in the number of Commissioners, that the frequency of meetings should be increased to two a month and that the NEDC should take an advocacy role on economic development issues. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion and it passed with Mr. Balboni abstaining.

The Commission discussed the need for additional resources to perform the scope of work as recommended for the NEDC, noting the value currently being provided by Simsbury Main Street Partnership as an economic development resource. Mr. Cooke noted that the transition to a different form of government would likely have an impact on staffing and the availability of a dedicated resource. Commissioner Frank stated that it was important to bring on a consultant to help with development of a strategic plan and that this should not be delayed to the FY2019 budget.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to recommend that the Board of Selectmen allocate funds for FY2018 for a consultant to assist with the creation and implementation of an economic development strategic plan. Commissioner Devivo seconded the motion and it passed with Commissioner Balboni abstaining.

Commissioner Moore made a motion that the Chair of the Economic Development Commission be authorized to write a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that the Economic Development Commission be included in the process of preparing a position description for the Town Manager

and potentially the First Selectwoman. Commissioner Frank seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Moore moved the adjournment of the meeting. Commissioner Frank seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas F. Cooke
Director of Administrative Services