

From: Carrie Vibert March 8, 2012 10:40:52 AM
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To: SimsburyCT_EconMin
Cc:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 9, 2012

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mark Deming, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order on Thursday, February 9th, 2012 at 7:35 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Town Offices. The following members were also present: Charles Minor, Louis George, Kevin Crimmins, Timothy Ellsworth, Shannon Knall, Chris Barnett and Allan Raphael. Also in attendance were Ferg Jansen, liaison to the Planning Commission, Hiram Peck, Town Planner, Leslie Faraci, Commission Clerk, Nancy Hasse, Board of Selectmen, and other interested parties.

Commissioner Deming opened the meeting by introducing the new members to the Commission; Chris Barnett, Allan Raphael and Shannon Knall. Commissioner Deming announced that the Commission members were invited, following the meeting, to join a tour of the Simsbury Library Resource Center, given by Librarian Jennifer Keohane.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 5, 2012

Commissioner Ellsworth made a motion to approve the minutes from January 5, 2012 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and was passed unanimously, with three abstentions (Commissioner Knall, Commissioner Barnett and Commissioner Raphael were not present at that meeting).

III. REPORTS; FVVA

In Nancy Anstey's absence, Commissioner Deming read a FVVA update she provided him. He read the following update items:

1. The FVVA is finishing up the final touches on their Night at the Oscars Fundraiser on February 26th for the Film Commission.
2. Press and fliers should be visible next week for the Mobs Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre Fundraiser for FVVA, scheduled for March 22nd.
3. They are working on the Annual Trails Clean-Up Day, April 25th.
4. They are finishing up the Historic Sites and Barn Tours, April

28th.

5. They are working on the Art Walk Simsbury, which is scheduled for May 19th.

6. The 2012 Member Drive has begun and they are finalizing the 2012 Guide plans to begin late March.

7. With Simsbury Tourism, they will be hosting a Farmington Valley Tourism Forum on May 15th,

All of this information is on their website containing further details.

IV. EDC BUDGET WORKSHOP: FEBRUARY 27, 2012 at 5:00PM

Commissioner Deming let the Commission members know their Budget Workshop will be held on February 27th at 5PM and he will be there to speak on behalf of their budget, specifically the marketing study included in the budget request this year. He invited the other Commission members to join him for that meeting. The budget was reviewed briefly. Mr. Jansen addressed the Commission saying that he thought there was strength in numbers, in terms of bring in front of the Board of Selectmen in support of the budget items. The Infrastructure Fund and Tax Abatement issues were discussed and whether or not the Commission members could bring them up at the meeting, even though they are not within the EDC Budget.

V. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Deming asked if there was any update with regards to the WPCA policy review. Mr. Peck said the consultant is still working on the report and that he wrote a memo to the consultant. He said the findings of the consultant's work are supposed to be complete by early March, at the latest. Commissioner Deming said when the report comes back, the sub-committee will then review the report and hopefully arrive at a new policy, which will need to be presented at a Public Hearing in order to adopt new policy. Mr. Peck said he still expects that something should be happening in March, as everyone is aware of how important this new policy will be. Commissioner Deming gave a brief review of the WPCA's FCC issue for the new EDC members. Commissioner Minor asked about what they are doing on the Mill project, and Commissioner Deming said they are waiting, on that portion of the project, for the new policy. Commissioner Ellsworth told the new members about how long and drawn out this process has been and the negative impact it has had with regards to potential new development. Commissioner Crimmins reminded everyone that the WPCA is run by a separate entity and not by the Town. It was discussed how the WPCA has quite an old policy that does not make sense with new land uses. When Commissioner Raphael asked about the position of the WPCA with regards to these potential changes, Mr. Peck said they need to recalculate their projections, as their projections were all made pre-2008, which are no longer relevant. Commissioner Barnett asked about the residential hook-up fees, which can be quite a burden to the homeowner, and sometimes they don't have a lot of other options. She

asked if this would be bad PR for the Town, giving the developers a break and not homeowners. Mr. Peck said this is an issue that they have been looking at for quite some time now and there are plans to put pumping stations in some of the areas she mentioned and the failing septic systems are also being looked at.

Commissioner Deming then reminded everyone that if there are issues they feel need to be discussed, let him know and he will get it on the Agenda. He let the new members know that the EDC's purpose is to increase the commercial tax base for the Town of Simsbury. Commissioner George said he thinks it is important to develop some idea of what the Commission wants to accomplish, on a short term and long term basis. He said this would enable them to be more proactive as a group, as opposed to solely being reactive. Commissioner Deming said he thinks WPCA is at the forefront right now, but he is welcome to hear other issues that can be a priority. Commissioner George said he thinks they need to have a forum where they can organize their priorities as a group. Commissioner Deming said the next meeting is March 8th and they would be happy to discuss this at that meeting. Commissioner Ellsworth said he agrees with Commissioner George and he thinks the Commission needs to be more strategic in generating some useful objectives for a given timeline in order to make things happen. Commissioner Crimmins mentioned the Governor's recent initiative to significantly increase funding, at the State-wide level, for CT Innovations and other State-funded investments in local businesses. He said they are going to have to make tons of investments in technology-oriented start-up companies and the Farmington Valley should see a lot of this money. He said identifying Simsbury as an incubator for start-ups is something to be proactive about and jump on now. Commissioner Crimmins said this is an initiative that should be approached from a Regional perspective and coordinated with the other EDCs. Commissioner Crimmins mentioned there should be a well-defined physical location where these incubator spaces exist.

Our relationship with surrounding town EDCs was discussed briefly.

Commissioner Deming said he tried to get the Community Economic Development Fund President to speak to the Commission for this meeting, although she could not come; he will try and get her for the next meeting. He mentioned they had put together approximately \$100MM, through member banks, with the sole purpose of lending to small businesses, with incentives for expanding. They discussed also \$10MM from DECD that essentially becomes grant money for small businesses. Commissioner Crimmins mentioned the Forum that Simsbury EDC and SMSP sponsored in May 2010, and the members spoke about how valuable that type of event would be this year and it would be productive to bring in the other EDCs as well.

Commissioner George asked about the plans for PAC concert series this year.

Mr. Jansen said they are interviewing outside consultants to look at everything and see how they can get more bang for their buck. Commissioner George said these events bring people to town, so the EDC should get involved. Mr. Jansen suggested that the EDC meet with the consultant, once they are hired.

Nancy Hasse, Board of Selectmen, on behalf of SMSP, said they are currently looking for a Market Master for the Farmer's Market. She also said their Annual Business Meeting is March 26th or March 27th.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Crimmins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and was unanimously passed.