



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Work Group

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

5:00 p.m.

Main Meeting Room, Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Members Present: Cheryl Cook, Eric Wellman

Staff Present: Maria Capriola, Melissa Appleby, Mike Glidden

Guests Present: Sarah Nielson, Dave Balboni, Kris Barnett, Tom Frank

The meeting was called to order at 5:05pm.

1) Discussion on Past Economic Development Initiatives

- a. Economic Development Task Force Report, November 2015
- b. Economic Implementation and Marketing Action Study (Fairweather Report), October 2013
- c. Memorandum from Simsbury Economic Development Commission, re: New Economic Development Commission, August 10, 2017

Mr. Wellman made reference to the work that has been done over the years on economic development, and noted that the proposed funds for an economic development strategic plan were removed from the proposed FY19 budget. The group discussed the need to identify the first step in moving forward with economic development. Mr. Wellman noted two options that he has considered for the initial step: development of the ordinance or development of an economic development strategic plan. After some discussion, it was determined that it would be prudent to begin with the development of the ordinance.

2) Discussion on Economic Development Commission Ordinance

Mr. Wellman and Ms. Cook asked the members of the former Economic Development Commission that were present to share the thinking behind the recommendations the Commission made last year. Ms. Barnett, Mr. Frank, and Mr. Balboni said that their recommendations were based on benchmarking of other towns' economic development commissions. They indicated that the new economic development commission will need clear direction from the Board of Selectmen. The recommendation for two meetings per month was driven by an understanding that this commission needs to commit significant time to hands on work. Ms. Cook discussed a need to have the economic development commission provide regular reports to the Board of Selectmen to facilitate ongoing discussion and ensure that the full Board is providing direction to the commission.

The group discussed the potential relationship between the Tourism Committee and the economic development commission, as tourism is one component of economic development.

There was also discussion around the relationship between the economic development commission and the land use commissions.

The identified the major items that should be addressed in the ordinance. This included:

- Membership: There was discussion around implementing the recommendation of the former economic development commission to have 7 members; 2 Republicans, 2 Democrats, and 3 Unaffiliateds.
- Appointment process: There was consensus that the process should be open, and appointments should be made based on merit by the Board of Selectmen.
- Terms: There was consensus that 4-year staggered terms would be appropriate.
- Duties: Potential duties include assisting with business recruitment and retention, serving as ambassadors for the Town, advocating for Simsbury at the state and regional levels, and pursuing grant funding. It was noted that there is an existing state statute that outlines the responsibilities of economic development commissions. Staff will research those requirements.

3) Regular Meeting Schedule

The group decided to set a regular meeting schedule of the first Tuesday of each month through the end of the calendar year. Meetings will be held at 5:00pm.

4) Next Steps

Staff will prepare a draft ordinance for review at the next regular meeting, which will be scheduled for Tuesday, June 5. Two special meetings will be scheduled in May. On May 14, members from the Tourism Committee and other Town committees will be invited to attend. On May 30, members of the business community will be invited.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:27pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager