



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Work Group

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

5:00 p.m.

Main Meeting Room, Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Cheryl Cook, Eric Wellman

Staff Present: Maria Capriola, Melissa Appleby, Mike Glidden

Guests Present: Sarah Nielsen

The meeting was called to order at 5:04pm.

1) Public Audience

None

2) Minutes of June 25, 2018

The minutes of June 25, 2018 were approved as presented by consensus.

3) CERC (CT Economic Resource Center) Services

a. Workshop on Fundamentals of Economic Development

Ms. Capriola noted that this workshop will be held on September 13, 2018 from 6:00-7:30pm at the Library. Relevant staff and board and commission members have been invited to attend.

b. Other Potential Professional Services

The group reviewed the proposal from CERC for economic development consulting services. Ms. Capriola indicated that CERC staff can assist the Board of Selectmen with setting the policy direction and developing a five-year plan for economic development. She noted that there are funds remaining in the FY17 POCD capital account that could potentially be reallocated for these services.

Ms. Cook noted that the Town has previously undertaken several studies that addressed some of the items in CERC's proposal. Ms. Capriola said that CERC can assist with creating a roadmap for economic development activities and developing measurable goals.

Mr. Wellman outlined the objective to develop 1-year and 3-year goals, and identify activities for the economic development commission based on these goals. Those activities should have metrics tied to them.

The group will revisit this proposal following the September 13 introductory workshop.

4) Draft EDC Membership Policy Resolution

The group reviewed the draft resolution, which includes new language to give the Board of Selectmen flexibility to appoint individuals with any of the desired skill sets identified in the event that there is difficulty filling the specified slots. In addition, language was added to the end of the resolution that gives the Board the right to amend the resolution as necessary.

The group decided to add “(liaison)” after the Board of Selectmen position to clarify that this ex officio member and the Board of Selectmen liaison will be the same person.

5) Next Steps/Adoption of Economic Development Commission Ordinance

Ms. Capriola noted that the public hearing on the draft ordinance will be on Monday, August 13, 2018. The Board of Selectmen will have two options that evening: adopt the proposed ordinance as presented, or with non-substantive modifications; or table adoption of the proposed ordinance until the September 12 meeting to consider public comment received at the hearing.

Ms. Capriola said that the Town Attorney has advised that minority representation rules do apply to this commission. In addition, he indicated that the Charter and the Town Code do not include a general provision that allows for removal of members of boards and commissions for cause.

6) Draft Social Media Policy

The group reviewed the draft policy, which provides standards for the use of Town social media accounts and websites. Ms. Capriola noted that this draft will need to be reviewed by the Town Attorney, labor counsel, and IT staff. It will also be reviewed with department directors.

The group agreed that Town social media accounts should not be used as public fora due to Freedom of Information Act requirements as well as concerns regarding potentially inappropriate dialogue. There was consensus that both Town departments and board and commissions should refrain from using social media to provide lengthy responses or engage in debate.

The group discussed the need to have a staff member responsible for each board and commission’s social media account. Staff will conduct an inventory of active accounts so that the Board of Selectmen can communicate the plan to implement this policy with the relevant individuals and advise groups on the steps they can take to retain their accounts.

There was consensus that Town accounts should not “follow” any political groups, local businesses, or other interest groups. In addition, Town accounts should not “share” or “re-tweet” any partisan content.

7) Draft Policy on Board, Commission, and Committee Members Communicating Policy Positions in their Official Town Capacity

Staff has not yet prepared a draft policy on this matter, but will work on developing a draft for the next meeting.

8) Business Development Committee (BDC)

Ms. Cook made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wellman, to add discussion of the Business Development Committee (BDC) to the agenda.

Ms. Capriola said that staff anticipates receiving an application for a tax abatement, and that this will require the BDC to meet in order to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. Because this committee has not met since 2015, new members will need to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. In addition, staff will be proposing edits to the Business Development Incentive Policy to clarify BDC membership roles and ensure that membership is always current. Specifically, the changes will clarify the role of the Town Manager and ensure that the Board of Selectmen appoints members to the BDC every two years. The proposed changes will be on the Board of Selectmen agenda on August 13, 2018.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager