



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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Economic Development Commission

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

5:30 pm

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

- 1) Business Recovery
 - a. Temporary Outdoor Dining for Restaurants
 - b. Oral Report from Main Street Partnership
 - c. Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce
 - d. Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian
 - e. Outreach to Stakeholders
 - f. Other
- 2) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates
 - a. Business Incentive Policy
 - b. Co-working Spaces
 - c. Business Outreach
 - d. Marketing
 - e. Other
- 3) Update on EDC Requests to the Board of Selectmen
 - a. Informal Business Outreach
 - b. Assisting with Chamber of Commerce Projects
 - c. EDC members assigned to Development Projects
- 4) 2019-2020 EDC Annual Report
- 5) Minutes July 22, 2020

Adjournment

2019-2020 EDC Work Plan - ADOPTED

Work Stream	Task	Person/People
Business Incentives	Complete research on business incentives. Provide recommendations/update Business Incentive Policy.	Peter Van Loon, Tom Earl Staff: Maria Capriola
Marketing	Complete marketing materials refresh for tourism, real estate, and business recruitment purposes.	Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy Staff: Sarah Nielsen
Marketing	Assist with promoting 350 th Anniversary events.	Charmaine Seavy, To be Determined Staff: Lisa Karim
Business Outreach	Conduct business outreach. Collect and track feedback.	Bob Crowther, Charmaine Seavy Staff: Mike Glidden
Business Outreach	Assist with gathering feedback on wayfinding signage needs (type, location, etc).	To be Determined (2) Staff: Sarah Nielsen
Support Entrepreneurs	Support infrastructure for entrepreneurs. Promote access to business resources, information, and infrastructure.	Peter Van Loon, Ron Jodice Staff: Andrew Sherman
Support Entrepreneurs	Develop a plan for co-working space.	Peter Van Loon, Ron Jodice Staff: Andrew Sherman

SIMSBURY FEE WAIVER AND TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAM

The goal of economic development is to improve the life of community residents by retaining and expanding existing businesses and attracting new businesses. Simsbury's Fee Waiver and Tax Abatement Program support the town's economic development.

The specific goals of the Simsbury Fee Waiver and Tax Abatement Program include one or more of the following: generating additional tax revenue, lasting employment opportunities, providing quality goods and services, improving the aesthetics of the community, preserving an historic site, providing desirable recreational and entertainment opportunities.

Types of Businesses Targeted by This Policy

Corporate headquarters and satellite offices
Research and high technology facilities
Advanced technology manufacturing facilities (only applies to job creation and real estate)
Existing Simsbury business expansion
Mixed-use development of a building or site
New or existing recreational or entertainment businesses
Historical preservation
Re-development of properties in certain neighborhoods (Tariffville, downtown, North village,
Green/sustainable improvements
Appropriate entrepreneurial businesses

Types of Assistance Available

Tax Abatement – the assessment of real property may be reduced for a period of time

Abatement Schedule

- A. For **new businesses**, the town will use the following table as a guide. The minimum required investment shall be based upon the actual capital investment in taxable real property improvements excluding land cost.

Maximum Taxable Real Property Improvement (market value)	Maximum Average % Abated Over Term	Maximum Term
Over \$3 million	50%	5 years
\$500,000 to \$3 million	40%	3 years

B. For **existing businesses**, the town will use the following table as a guide. The minimum required investment shall be based upon the actual capital investment in taxable real property improvements excluding land cost.

Maximum Taxable Real Property Improvement (market value)	Maximum Average % Abated Over Term	Maximum Term
Over \$3 million	50%	7 years
\$500,000 to \$3 million	50%	3 years

Waiving or Reducing of any Town Permit Fees – reduction amount is variable depending on impact of proposed project

The town may waive up to 50% of any town permit fees upon determination that such a fee waiver would encourage the development or expansion of quality businesses, especially those in the targeted industries.

Application Requirements and Procedures

Step 1

Applicant submits a Business Development Assistance Application (supplied by the town) to the Planning Department. The Planning Director, Assessor and Finance Director would complete any needed cost/benefit analysis (e.g. quality of life enhancements/costs – e.g noise, pollution, congestion, environmental impact, aesthetics) and submit this analysis to the Town Manager for review. The information and recommendation is then submitted to the Business Development Committee. The recommendation shall be within the limits of the Tax Exemption Schedule and Permit Fee Schedule.

Step 2

The Business Development Committee, in consultation with the Town Manager , will review the application and recommendation and resolve any issues with the applicant and appropriate town staff.

Step 3

The Business Development Committee and the Town Manager make a final recommendation to the Board of Selectman.

Step 4

Upon preliminary approval by the Board of Selectman, The Town Manager will work with the applicant and the town attorney to draft a legal contract that assures that all the provisions of the Business Development Incentive Program will be met. The contract may include a provision for yearly reporting , if deemed necessary, to assure that the provisions of the contract are met.

Step 5

In order for the incentive to become legal the Board of Selectman must approve the final Business Development Incentive (s) in contract form by majority vote. The Board of Selectman shall then authorize the Town Manager to sign the proposed final contract as approved in form.

Note: the Fee Waiver and Tax Abatement Program is completely separate form the statutorily required local land use approval process.

Transparency

A portion of the town website shall be dedicated to tax abatement information which would include awards and abatement documents

Accountability

Regular reporting by the applicant on compliance with provisions of the contract (employment , construction schedule, and any other performance measures) is required. The Town Manager and, if necessary, the towns auditors shall verify that the applicant is in compliance with all provisions of the contract.

Economic Development Strategies – To Attract and Retain Businesses

The town is committed to the strategies and aspirations listed below.

- 1. Diversification and broadening of tax base to minimize tax increases**
- 2. Streamline planning and zoning practices**
 - some changes have been made and others are being discussed
 - implement suggestions received from local businesses to simplify and make transparent all permitting and zoning requirements
 - consolidate land use bodies and allow administrative approvals by staff
- 3. Maintain Simsbury's quality of life offerings**
 - excellent school system, attractive parks and trails, library, social services, senior center, well maintained infrastructure
- 4. Business retention – stay in touch with businesses**
 - surveys, meetings, etc.
 - partner and collaborate with Chamber of Commerce, Main Street
 - continue EDC outreach to ensure the concerns and needs of our businesses are addressed by town government
 - efforts include increasing marketing budget, promoting state programs (Small Business Incentive Program, Grow Connecticut Rebate Program, etc.)
- 5. Make infrastructure Improvements**
 - ensure that infrastructure: transportation, technological (fiber optics, band width), and building infrastructure is both maintained and improved by proper stewardship of town resources, engagement of state government and collaboration with local and state businesses
- 6. Support Entrepreneurs and current town businesses**
 - EDC outreach, Business Resource Center in library
 - Expand outreach to include assigning ombudsmen from EDC or other Simsbury residents to work directly with businesses interested in moving to Simsbury or eager to stay in town
 - EDC led effort to develop co-working spaces for entrepreneurs
- 7. Provide diverse housing options**
 - continue to support the development of housing options for singles , young families, low income residents and the elderly. The new and varied housing projects in town are examples to build on

Process & Parameters for matching EDC members with new development projects

- ***Long Term Goal / Objective*** - By matching a member of the EDC with a new development project in town, the member can begin to build a relationship with that customer that will carry through completion of the project and into implementation of the new business. With this history, the member can better serve that customer in the years ahead.
- **Parameters**
 - The member is expected to attend any Town meetings (i.e. Zoning, Planning, Design Review Board) as an observer to gain an understanding of any issues and challenges the customer has through out the Town approval process and building of the business venture.
 - As an observer, the member will be aware of the issues and challenges the customer has gone through in the development process. They will carry this history with them as they establish a relationship with the customer going forward.
 - By having this knowledge, the EDC member will be in a better position to support the customer as they grow their business in Simsbury in the years ahead.
 - The EDC member should not attempt to actively participate in these Town meetings. Many of these Boards are highly regulated, and the Board members have the knowledge of these regulations. The EDC member is not expected to know these regulations. Therefore, the member should let the Board members who have the knowledge and skills required of their Boards do their jobs.
 - The EDC member should be encouraged to ask questions after meetings to better gain an understanding of the situation for their own knowledge. They may also offer suggestions or ideas, but should do so working through the Boards and Town Management.
 - The EDC member is expected to access the Town website for meeting notices of the various Boards. If their customer is on the Agenda, they would be expected to attend that meeting. If unable to attend, then they are responsible for getting the minutes from the meeting to stay informed of the process.



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Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes - DRAFT

Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 5:30pm
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:30pm. Commission members Bob Crowther, Peter Van Loon, Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy and Tom Earl were present. Ex officio members Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Bill Rice (Planning Commission) and Jackie Battos (Board of Selectmen), were also present. Staff members in attendance included Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, Andrew 'Sherm' Sherman, Business Resource Center Coordinator and Thomas Fitzgerald, Management Specialist. Guest Sarah Nielsen (Simsbury Main Street Partnership) was also present.

1) Business Recovery

a) Temporary Outdoor Dining for Restaurants

Mr. Glidden and Ms. Nielsen gave updates to the Commission on outdoor dining in Town. The public to visit the locations that are open to outdoor dining but to please adhere to the guidelines.

b) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen stated that the taste of Simsbury event is canceled this year due to the current pandemic. Ms. Nielsen said that Main Street is in a little bit of a quiet period currently but they are planning for a potential round 2 of COVID coinciding with Flu season. Ms. Nielsen said that the Chamber and Main Street are meeting to discuss how to maximize both entities to the best of Simsbury.

c) Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian

Mr. Sherman reported residents are still reaching out about COVID relief. He also informed the group that the Library has been doing a lot of work while it is closed to the public and that the curbside service is very popular. Mr. Sherman said that public computers are available by appointment with a limited number of computers available to follow social distancing.

d) Outreach to Stakeholders

Mr. Crowther and Mr. Earl have begun reaching out to businesses, non-profits, schools and faith based institutions in town to speak about their recovery efforts. Mr. Crowther informed the group about a conversation he had with the Director of Social Services about their efforts for helping the Simsbury community during the pandemic. Mr. Crowther and Mr. Earl went into in depth talks about what they learned from each conversation.

2) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates

Mr. Van Loon asked the group for guidance on best approach for searching local landlords about creating co-working spaces. The group went into a lengthy discussion about the best way to go about creating a widespread co-working environment in town amongst a group of landlords in town.

Ms. Seavy said that the marketing group has no updates at the moment. Ms. Capriola updated the group on the marketing funds being set aside from the BOF at last year's close and that the town is working on rolling over those funds to the current year when Finance does their yearend wrap up.

3) New EDC Plans

Mr. Crowther asked the group to consider 3 new EDC plans to assist in the group's mission. The first of those plans was to have EDC members check in with local businesses while they are out shopping and then report back to the group about what they are hearing from the owners. The second of the plans was to have the EDC pick up projects from Main Street and the Chamber that have been pushed to the back burner due to the pandemic and recovery assistance. The third plan was to assign EDC members to new development projects as a contact to build relationships between the business, town and the EDC.

4) Minutes

a) June 24, 2020

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Earl seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald,
Management Specialist