



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission **Regular Meeting** **Minutes - Approved**

Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 5:30pm
Simsbury Public Library, Program Room 2 – 725 Hopmeadow Street

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:30pm. Commission members Peter Van Loon, Carrie Meckel, Brooke Freeman and Tom Earl were present. Ex officio members Jackie Battos (Zoning Commission) and Bill Rice (Planning Commission) were also present. Staff members in attendance included Town Manager Maria Capriola, Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby and Director of Planning and Community Development Mike Glidden. Guests in attendance included Patrick McMahon, CEO of CT Main Street Center, Lisa Gray, Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties.

1) Introduction of New Member

Tom Earl, the newest member of the commission, introduced himself and provided some information on his background and experience. Mr. Crowther said that Mr. Earl's knowledge of the land use application process and practical experience will be an asset to the commission.

2) Guest Speaker: Patrick McMahon, CEO, CT Main Street Center

Mr. McMahon provided an overview of the CT Main Street Center, which is a statewide non-profit organization that works to develop investment in downtown areas and mixed used corridors. The organization receives funding from Eversource, financial institutions, and the State Department of Economic and Community Development. Mr. McMahon provided an overview of CT Main Street Center's initiatives, such as the C-PACE program through the Green Bank, a focus on adaptive reuse of historic buildings, networking events, and advocating for relevant legislation.

Mr. McMahon gave a presentation on the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program. The presentation included: background on the enabling legislation; how a TIF works; requirements for establishing a TIF district; and how you can use TIF revenue.

Ms. Capriola noted that it would be appropriate to consider a TIF policy in the context of the revised business incentive policy.

3) EDC Work Plan

a) Update from work streams/teams

- *Business Incentives* – Mr. Van Loon reviewed the discussion had by this work team at their meeting earlier in the day. In particular, he discussed the need to use

the business incentive policy to attract knowledge-based businesses. This will require broadening the language in the policy.

- *Strategic Vision* – Mr. Crowther said that he conducted a review of the past studies, and provided an overview of his write-up. He identified the specific recommendations included in these studies, and determined which have already been implemented, which are currently being addressed by the EDC work streams, and those that could still be addressed. There are four priorities that are worth exploring further.
- *Business Recruitment, Retention, and Outreach* – Mr. Crowther said that this team is working on putting together a list of 10 to 15 businesses to invite to the roundtable. He reviewed the draft interview guide, which includes a core set of questions to ask the businesses. He said that the next step will be to finalize the questions and identify a date to hold the roundtable.
- *Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing* – Ms. Freeman said that she conducted some research on the Town website to try to replicate the experience a potential business owner may have with the Town's materials. She noted that there are challenges navigating the website and locating resources, and that there is outdated content. She referenced the City of Boston's website as a good user-friendly model.

4) Housekeeping Items

a) CCM "Creating" Business Workshop – 3/19

Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Earl volunteered to attend this workshop.

b) Reschedule November 2019 Meeting

The November meeting was rescheduled from November 27 to November 20 due to the former date being so close to Thanksgiving.

c) Assign New Member to Work Stream

Mr. Earl was assigned to the Business Incentives work stream.

d) Reports/Updates to and from EDC, Planning, Zoning, and Board of Selectmen liaisons

There were no reports.

e) Sustainability Team

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to add Sustainability Team to the agenda. Ms. Meckel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion pass unanimously.

Ms. Capriola said that a memo was forthcoming regarding the Sustainable CT certification program. This concept was approved by the Board of Selectmen, and focuses on a wide range of efforts that communities can take to improve their overall sustainability by reducing energy use and gaining efficiencies that can lower our

operating costs. A sustainability team is being formed to assist with the certification process, and there is one slot for the EDC. Ms. Meckel volunteered to participate in this initiative.

5) Minutes

a) January 23, 2019

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

Adjournment

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to adjourn at 7:10pm. Ms. Meckel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager