



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, March 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, Brooke Freeman, Bill Freeman, Ron Jodice and Tom Earl were present. Ex officio member Bill Rice (Planning Commission) was also present. Staff members in attendance included Town Manager Maria Capriola, Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby, Director of Planning and Community Development Mike Glidden and Sarah Nielsen of the Main Street Partnership. Guests in attendance included Lisa Gray, Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties.

### **1) Guest Speaker: Lisa Gray, Executive Director, Simsbury Chamber of Commerce**

Ms. Gray provided an overview of the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, which is a membership organization that focuses on business support and advocacy. The organization has 110 local business members. Ms. Gray provided a brief history of the Chamber, described the work conducted by its committees, and discussed the special events, educational programs, and other initiatives facilitated by the Chamber. Ms. Gray also provided an overview of the visitors center, the scholarship program, annual chili challenge, community service and outreach efforts, and marketing opportunities through the Chamber website.

Mr. Crowther noted that the EDC should be a productive partner with the Chamber, and Ms. Gray agreed that we should continue to work on collaboration between the EDC, the Chamber and the Main Street Partnership. Mr. Crowther said that we need to think through consistent messaging among the three entities so that we are delivering a single message regarding doing business in Simsbury.

### **2) EDC Work Plan**

#### **a) Update from work streams/teams**

- *Business Incentives* – Mr. Van Loon said that it would be helpful to hear from small business owners regarding the kinds of incentives that would be useful for them. He said that collecting feedback from businesses would help frame how we develop specific incentive packages. Mr. Crowther noted that this could be wrapped into the work of the business outreach work team. Mr. Crowther suggested putting together a summary outline of the programs that are currently available.

Mr. Earl reviewed his research of other towns' websites and the information they provide on business incentives. He noted that Windsor and Manchester are good models.

- *Strategic Vision* – Mr. Crowther reviewed the four recommendations from prior studies that may be explored further. Mr. Crowther and Mr. Jodice volunteered to work on the review of the application approval process for land use proposals. The second recommendation, which is in regards to simplifying the zoning regulations, is already underway. The EDC will keep informed of this initiative through Mr. Jodice, the liaison to the Zoning Commission, and Jackie Battos, ex officio member from Zoning. The third recommendation, which is to create a project evaluation guide for evaluating new developments, will be explored in the future as a tool for the EDC to make recommendation to the business incentive committee. The final recommendation, which is to create an orientation manual for EDC members, will also be explored in the future.
- *Business Recruitment, Retention, and Outreach* – Mr. Crowther reviewed the list of tier 1 and tier 2 businesses that he worked on with staff. The tier 1 businesses will be targeted for one-on-one meetings, and the tier 2 businesses will be targeted for the roundtable discussions. Mr. Crowther said that the first roundtable will be held in May at the Masonic Lodge (specific date to be determined). Mr. Van Loon noted that the roundtable should be opened up to businesses that are not on the list. Ms. Capriola said that we can advertise the event and let businesses know that they can reach out to us if they would like to participate.
- *Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing* – There was no update on this item. Ms. Capriola noted that there is no funding in the FY20 budget for the marketing materials, but that there may be an opportunity to make use of current year funds if available at year-end.

### **3) Housekeeping Items**

#### **a) CCM “Creating” Business Workshop – 3/19**

Mr. Earl attended this workshop, and he provided a summary to the group as well as copies of the workshop materials. He noted that there was a strong focus on the concept of co-working spaces, and provided several examples from other municipalities.

#### **b) Reports/Updates to and from EDC, Planning, Zoning, and Board of Selectmen liaisons**

Mr. Jodice said that there is discussion occurring at the Zoning Commission regarding Airbnb rentals. Ms. Capriola said that the Commission will likely refer this matter to the Board of Selectmen, which would then develop an ordinance to regulate the use. Mr. Freeman noted that there is a new restaurant going into the 1820 House in May.

**4) Minutes**

**a) February 27, 2019**

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

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Appleby  
Deputy Town Manager