



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, April 24, 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 members Town Manager Maria Capriola and Jackie Battos (Zoning Commission) were also present. Staff members in attendance included Sarah Nielsen of the Main Street Partnership and graduate student intern Tom Fitzgerald.

1) EDC Work Plan

a) Update from work streams/teams

- *Business Recruitment, Retention and Outreach* – Mr. Crowther notified the group that he and the Town Manager feel they have identified 11 Tier 1 businesses in town. The plan is to establish a meeting once a year with those businesses to increase contact between them and the Town/EDC. Mr. Crowther notified the group of the Business roundtable idea and how it is coming along. The plan is to have 24 businesses show up and split into smaller groups to discuss issues and other ideas with Town officials and EDC members. The group identified June 12th as the potential date of these roundtable discussions. Details will be worked out in the coming weeks and finalized at a future EDC meeting.
- *Business Incentives* – Mr. Earl reviewed his conversation with the Economic Development Director in Windsor. The conversation talked about the ways Windsor attracts and retains businesses and the different incentive plans offered. Mr. Earl also referenced a business incentive benchmarking project recently completed by Windsor. There was group discussion of comparing the business incentive application review process in Windsor to Simsbury's process. Town staff informed the Commission of the process in Simsbury.
- *Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing* – 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. Ms. Freeman mentioned that there is a plan for her, Mr. Freeman and Ms. Nielsen to get together with members of the Tourism Committee to see if a combined effort on marketing materials is plausible. Mr. Freeman mentioned his idea of using the banner across Hopmeadow Street to advertise Simsbury to potential business

owners since it is a heavily trafficked area. The group liked that idea and will revisit it in future meetings.

- *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.

2) Housekeeping Items

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

Mr. Jodice mentioned the McLean informational presentation given to the Zoning Commission on April 15th. Ms. Battos was able to give the group some details about the potential project including the scope. It was noted that McLean is on the Tier 1 group discussed earlier in the night.

b) Future guest speakers/education topics

Ms. Capriola informed the group that the Library was still in the recruitment process of a Business Resource Center Coordinator. Ms. Capriola asked the group if there are any future topics they would like potential guest speakers to discuss. Mr. Van Loon mentioned having public safety officials come and give their thoughts and ideas on economic development in Town as a way to involve all stakeholders. Mr. Earl reported on a program he went to recently and brought up the idea of potentially asking David Lehman, the Commissioner of the Department of Economic & Community Development, to guest speak to discuss State and Local partnerships.

3) Minutes

a) March 27, 2019

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

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald
Graduate Student Intern