



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, May 22, 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, Bill Freeman, Ron Jodice and Tom Earl were present. Ex officio members Maria Capriola, Town Manager, and Bill Rice, Chair of the Planning Commission, were also present. Staff members in attendance included Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager. Others in attendance included Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of the Main Street Partnership, Lisa Gray, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and Ferg Jansen.

1) Guest Speaker: Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, Development Update

Mr. Glidden gave a presentation that provided an overview of projects that are currently underway, those that have been approved, preliminary projects, and other development matters that are on the horizon. This included:

- 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford Insurance site) –mixed use development, including housing and assisted living
- 30 Hopmeadow Street (Aspen Green) – housing development with 10% affordable housing units
- Cambridge Crossing – housing development with 20% affordable housing units
- 690 Hopmeadow (Ensign mansion) –new location for Metro Bis; will also include office space, apartments, and a salon
- 34 Hopmeadow Street (former CL&P building) – location for the Curaleaf expansion
- Tobacco Valley Solar – construction has started on the 26.4 megawatt solar farm off Hoskins and County Road
- *Preliminary:*
 - Preliminary plans have been put together for the redevelopment of the Simscroft property on Iron Horse Boulevard
 - McLean is planning an expansion, pending a zoning text amendment to allow for increase building height
 - Potential redevelopment of 18 acres in southwest part of town off of Route 44

Mr. Crowther asked whether the new developments have fully replaced the tax revenue lost when The Hartford left. Ms. Capriola said that several of the housing developments have moved into the top ten taxpayers list. Mr. Earl asked about the traffic impacts of new development;

discussion ensued regarding how this matter is evaluated during the permitting process at both the state and local level. Mr. Jodice noted that increased development will have an impact on police, fire, and ambulance services.

2) EDC Work Plan

a) Update from work streams/teams

- *Strategic Vision* – Mr. Jodice reviewed the summary document that he put together regarding the permitting process. This includes three steps: staff review, commission review, and construction. The summary document included an overview of the parties involved at each step and the documentation required of the applicant. Mr. Crowther noted that this summary is the current, “as is” state, and that the goal is to analyze the process to identify any areas where efficiency can be improved.

Mr. Crowther said that the two other items identified from past reports – an orientation guide for commission members and the development of a project evaluation guide – will be future projects.

- *Business Recruitment, Retention and Outreach* – Mr. Crowther reviewed the tier 1 business list, which includes eleven companies that will be visited annually. He also reviewed the tier 2 list, which includes 30 businesses that have been invited to the first quarterly roundtable on June 12. He reviewed the draft agenda and discussion topics for that roundtable meeting. Mr. Freeman, Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Earl will attend that event to assist with facilitation.
- *Business Incentives* – Mr. Van Loon provided an overview of the Business Development Committee’s discussions regarding the EBAD tax abatement application.

Ms. Capriola indicated that Mr. Earl has conducted research on incentives, and that more information will be forthcoming in June.

- *Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing* – A report on this work stream is anticipated in June.

3) Housekeeping Items

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

Mr. Jodice noted that the Zoning Commission held a public hearing on May 20 for an application to run a bed and breakfast at the property at 45 Old Farms Road. He said that the hearing revealed a lot of debate on this topic. The hearing was continued to the June 3 meeting.

b) EBAD Business Development Application

Ms. Capriola provided an overview of the tax abatement that was approved for Ensign Bickford Aerospace and Defense. The company had submitted a tax

abatement and fee waiver request for 632 (640) Hopmeadow Street to assist with an expansion that would add 140 well-paying jobs and a \$12 million investment (real estate, personal property, and manufacturing equipment) to their campus. This request was reviewed by staff and the Business Development Committee, and the Board of Selectmen ultimately approved a ten-year abatement that applies only to the real estate new growth, and a waiver of 50% of certain permit fees not to exceed \$25,000.

c) TIF Concept (staff report)

Ms. Capriola reported that she and Mr. Glidden are in the process of drafting a potential plan, including the structure and potential boundaries for a TIF district. She expects a draft to be presented to the EDC this summer.

d) Networking event with the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Partnership

Mr. Crowther said that he has been in contact with Main Street Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce regarding an informal gathering to discuss how the three groups might collaborate further. Mr. Crowther expressed interest in exploring how the three groups can partner on marketing and branding initiatives to ensure that all parties are consistent in their messaging, and that similar resources are made available from all three sources.

4) Minutes

a) April 24, 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

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to adjourn at 7:20pm. Mr. Freeman seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager