



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, July 28, 2021 at 5:30pm  
Simsbury Public Library, Program Room – 725 Hopmeadow Street

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:31pm. Commission members Ron Jodice, Tom Earl (virtual), Charmaine Seavy (virtual), and Peter Van Loon (virtual) were present. Ex officio members Bill Rice (Planning Commission, virtual) and Jackie Battos were also present. Staff members in attendance included Maria Capriola, Town Manager (virtual) and Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager. Members of the SPIRIT Council in attendance included Nicole Kodak and Cheryl Cook. Also in attendance was Mark Scully of the Clean Energy Task Force.

### **1) Introduction to SPIRIT Council**

Mr. Crowther provided an overview of SPIRIT Council and noted that this presentation is informational only. Ms. Cook introduced herself and Ms. Kodak, two of SPIRIT's co-chairs. She discussed the potential connection between the work of SPIRIT and EDC, noting that diversity is good for economic development.

Ms. Cook and Ms. Kodak gave a presentation detailing the work of SPIRIT, including: the background/history; the vision and mission; members; the various sub-committees (events, outreach, data/audit, housing); and publicity received to-date. They noted that Montgomery, OH and Decatur, GA are models for diversity, equity and inclusion work.

Following the presentation, Mr. Crowther opened up the discussion to commission members. He asked how SPIRIT expects to turn their work into results. Ms. Cook discussed the work being done in regards to data collection, which will help with measuring how we meet the needs of all residents. Discussion ensued regarding the need to be a welcoming community, including having a robust local economy that serves the needs of all residents.

Mr. Crowther said that SPIRIT should be included in the marketing project being coordinated by EDC. Ms. Cook and Ms. Kodak said that it would be helpful to have a liaison from EDC to the housing sub-committee. Mr. Crowther said that the EDC will identify one of its members to serve in this capacity.

Mr. Earl noted the work of the Westminster and Ethel Walker with the Horizons program, and suggested that SPIRIT connects with the work that those schools are doing. Ms. Kodak said that there is representation from Ethel Walker on SPIRIT.

Ms. Kodak said that the development updates from the Planning Director are helpful for SPIRIT, and that they would like the opportunity to continue attending those meetings.

Mr. Scully said that SPIRIT's work connects well with the Sustainable CT program. He said that the Sustainability Team can share resources with SPIRIT, and that the Sustainable Team can use SPIRIT's work to support its Sustainable CT certification.

## **2) 2020-2021 EDC Work Plan Updates**

### **a) Marketing Project Update**

Ms. Seavy said that she will work with Ms. Nielsen and DKA to include SPIRIT in their work. Mr. Crowther said that the results of the marketing study will be presented at the August 9 Board of Selectmen meeting.

### **b) Pandemic Follow-Up Outreach**

Mr. Crowther said that he and Mr. Earl reached out to non-profits, private schools, and churches in order to do an analysis of the recovery. This was a follow-up to the outreach that was done earlier on in the pandemic. Mr. Crowther noted that the business outreach was handled by the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Partnership.

Mr. Crowther reported that food needs doubled during the peak of the pandemic. While the demand has come down, food insecurity is still higher than it was prior to the pandemic. He said that all of the churches he spoke with took advantage of the Paycheck Protection Program. Mr. Earl reported that private school enrollment has been steady. The churches he spoke with are seeing their attendance increase.

### **c) Co-working Spaces/Supporting Entrepreneurs**

Ms. Appleby reported that while the co-working proposal has been prepared, staff is planning to package this project with a few others that may be eligible for funding through the American Rescue Plan. This will be presented once the complete set of proposals is finalized.

### **d) Other**

None

## **3) Stakeholder and Liaison Updates**

### **a) Main Street Partnership**

None

### **b) Chamber of Commerce**

Mr. Crowther provided an overview of the Government Affairs committee. He said that there has been a focus on a featured speaker each month, such as the Town Manager on budget issues, and the chair of the Zoning Commission.

### **c) Business & Career Center**

None

**d) Zoning**

Mr. Jodice reported that there has been a lot of permitting activity, including the recently approved Barber Cove project on Iron Horse Boulevard.

**e) Design Review**

None

**f) Sustainability**

None

**g) Development Projects**

None

**h) Other**

None

**4) Housekeeping: Meeting Format**

The group expressed an interest in continuing with the hybrid format.

**5) Minutes June 23, 2021**

Mr. Jodice made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 23, 2021 meeting as presented.

Mr. Van Loon seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:44pm. Mr. Jodice seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa Appleby  
Deputy Town Manager