



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 5:30pm
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:32pm. Commission members Tom Earl, Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy and Peter Van Loon were present. Ex officio member Bill Rice (Planning Commission) was also present. Staff members in attendance included Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager, Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Andrew 'Sherm' Sherman, Business and Career Center Coordinator. Morgan Hilyard, Executive Director of the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, and Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of Main Street Partnership, were also present.

1) Housekeeping Items

a) Selection of Chair for November 2020 – October 2021

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to appoint Bob Crowther as chair for November 2020-November 2021. Mr. Earl seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

b) Selection of Vice Chair for November 2020 – October 2021

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to appoint Tom Earl as vice chair for November 2020-November 2021. Mr. Crowther seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

c) Sustainability Team Representative

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to appoint Bob Crowther as the EDC representative to the Sustainability Team. Mr. Earl seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

d) Liaison Appointments for November 2020 – October 2021

i. Zoning

The committee agreed by consensus to appoint Ron Jodice as the EDC liaison to Zoning.

ii. Design Review

The committee agreed by consensus to appoint Bob Crowther as the EDC liaison to Design Review.

e) 2021 Regular Meeting Schedule

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to approve the meeting schedule for 2021. Mr. Earl seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

f) Status of Filling EDC Vacancy

Mr. Crowther provided an update on the interviews that were conducted for the vacant slot. He said that four candidates were interviewed, and they were all great. Lori Wagner, who has marketing experience and owns a small business in Simsbury, will be recommended to the Board of Selectmen for appointment.

2) Business Recovery

a) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen gave an update on the activities of the 350th committee and Simsbury Celebrates. She discussed the Shop Simsbury campaign, which is a combination of Black Friday and Small Business Saturday. Local businesses will be offering a 20% bonus, either through gift cards or coupons. She also provided an update on the ongoing communications being sent out to businesses regarding COVID resources. She noted that there have been some COVID-related closures, but that there are some new business openings occurring.

b) Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Hilyard said that the Art Trail is officially closed, and that it was very successful. The Spooktacular event, a drive-through trick-or-treat event held on 10/18, went very well. There were 360 families, with a total of approximately 1,500 attendees. She said that she is working with businesses on staying creative and adapting to the current COVID restrictions, especially with the colder weather coming. She is also focusing on connecting Chamber businesses with non-profit organizations to collaborate and work together on events and initiatives.

c) Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian

Mr. Sherman provided an update on the Library's limited reopening, including the ability to browse and check-out materials, computer use, and continued curbside pickup. He said that meeting space is not available for now.

d) Other

Mr. Crowther said that at the last Sustainability Team meeting, a representative from the CT Sustainability Team spoke about a matching fund for eligible projects. He said that we should keep this in mind for any projects that might be eligible. Through this program the state Sustainability Team would contribute \$7,500 and the matching amount would be raised via crowdfunding based on local interest.

3) 2020-2021 EDC Work Plan Brainstorming

Mr. Crowther said that the one item that the group has not worked on is marketing for the 350th celebrations. Ms. Nielsen said that the members could assist by helping to promote the events that have been planned. Ms. Capriola said that because the 350th committee has its own marketing sub-committee, this can come off of the list as a formal item.

The group agreed that the new “shadowing program,” in which EDC members will be assigned to development projects, should be added to the work plan. This item will fall under Business Outreach.

4) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates

a) Business Incentive Policy

Ms. Capriola said that the final draft will be presented to the Board of Selectmen in November.

b) Co-working Spaces

Ms. Hilyard said that she needs to regroup with Mr. Van Loon on this item, and that she has started to reach out to landlords to gauge interest. Ms. Nielsen is assisting with this outreach as well.

c) Business Outreach

Mr. Crowther said that the meetings with large employers have been reinstituted. There were recent meetings with Chris Nelson of Highcroft and Dyno Nobel, and there are upcoming meetings with Mitchell’s, Simsbury Commons, and Simsmore Square.

Mr. Crowther said that the next step in this work plan is to reach out to smaller businesses. Ms. Hilyard said that she can share the list of businesses; Mr. Crowther said that the members can split up the list and start conducting outreach.

d) Marketing

Ms. Nielsen, Ms. Freeman, and Ms. Seavy met to discuss the draft contract, which they should have to Ms. Capriola next week. Ms. Seavy noted how beneficial it is to be working with a local firm that really knows and understands the Town.

e) Other

Ms. Nielsen said that the outdoor dining committee met this week. They approved the concepts for enclosed outdoor dining at both Millwright’s and Meadow. Main Street is working on the next iteration of the local dining guide, which includes the COVID-compliant offerings at local establishments.

5) Minutes - September 23, 2020

Mr. Earl made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented. Ms. Seavy seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Seavy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35pm. Mr. Earl seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager