



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, January 22, 2020 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, Ron Jodice, Charmaine Seavy, Tom Earl and Brooke Freeman were present. Ex officio members, Bill Rice (Planning Commission), and Diane Madigan (Zoning Commission) were also present. Staff members in attendance included Thomas Fitzgerald, Management Specialist and Andrew ‘Sherm’ Sherman, Business Resource Center Coordinator.

1) Guest Speaker: Cheryl Cook and Kris Barnett – 350th Anniversary Steering Committee

Ms. Cook and Ms. Barnett presented on behalf of the 350th Anniversary Steering Committee to inform the EDC of some of the events that will be happening in 2020 for the 350th Anniversary of Simsbury. The 350th believes this will be a big draw for tourism to the town and thus a big year for local businesses. Some assistance from the EDC in the marketing area of the events was requested by the Committee. The EDC discussed providing help in populating the “VisitCTNow” website. Also, as new marketing materials are generated by the EDC, the commission will share the documents with the Committee.

2) Guest Speaker: Mark Scully – Clean Energy Task Force Draft Energy Plan

Mr. Scully presented on the Draft Energy Plan that the Clean Energy Task Force developed. It is intended as a roadmap for what can be done in the future and the need to raise awareness of options available to residents and local businesses. Discussion ensued about how the EDC sees value of these plans and how there needs to be a balance of cost with the benefits of making Simsbury 100% renewable.

3) EDC Adopted 2019-2020 Work Plan

a) Updated work streams/teams

- *Business Incentives* – The group gave input on the draft Business Incentive Policy that Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Earl created. Discussion took place where the group mentioned that the content is good but it just needs refreshing on the policy format. The accountability section was mentioned as one of new parts that the group really liked. While one of the documents currently reads like a guidance document for what the town should do to attract business, the group liked the goals. More work needs to be done to better refine these statements. There was talk of the current policy looking more like a fee waiver and tax abatement policy. Rather than a Business Incentive Policy and should the group create two policies, one more “aspirational” in nature and one for Fee Waivers and Tax Abatements? The team will seek guidance at our next meeting with Town Manager Maria Capriola

- *Business Outreach* – Mr. Crowther gave an update on a business visit that staff and himself went on to Curaleaf. This is part of an initiative for the EDC and Town Staff to visit different businesses in town to learn about their operations and learn how it is doing business in Simsbury and if there are any ways to improve the business climate in town. Mr. Crowther mentioned the roundtable with Senator Witkos and Representative Hampton taking place on the morning of Tuesday, February 11. He noted that moving forward, the roundtables will be more industry-specific. He will be connecting with Sarah Nielsen on coordinating a roundtable for the real estate group in the future.
- *Support Entrepreneurs* – Mr. Van Loon described the difference between Business Incubator and Co-Working space. Mr. Sherman gave an update on goals of the Library to help create a Co-working space. The work in this area being done by the Town of Manchester was mentioned by Mr. Earl, and the team agreed it could be a good point of reference. Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Jodice will continue to research this area and coordinate their findings with the work Mr. Sherman is doing with the Library Business Resource area.
- *Marketing* – Ms. Freeman and Ms. Seavy are planning to meet with Sarah Nielsen to meet to discuss how to move forward with updating the current EDC marketing materials.

4) Housekeeping Items

- a) **Reports/updates to and from EDC, Planning, Zoning, and Board of Selectmen liaisons**
No updates at this time.

5) Minutes

- a) **December 18, 2019**

Mr. Van Loon 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 7:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald
Management Specialist