



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 5:30pm
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:33pm. Commission members Ron Jodice, Charmaine Seavy, Tom Earl, Lori Wagner, and Brooke Freeman were present. Ex officio members Bill Rice (Planning Commission) and Jackie Battos (Board of Selectmen) were also present. Staff members in attendance included Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Tom Fitzgerald, Management Specialist, Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Andrew 'Sherm' Sherman, Business & Career Center Coordinator. Morgan Hilyard, Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, and Sarah Nielsen, Simsbury Main Street Partnership, were also in attendance.

1) Business Recovery

a) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen gave an update about a business opening event attended earlier in the month. Ms. Nielsen also gave an update on the Governor coming to Simsbury to sign an extension of the Outdoor Dining Bill. Ms. Nielsen updated the group that the funding for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund will be a grant and not a loan, which is good news for all.

b) Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Hilyard updated the group that the Chamber is planning for their annual meeting and awards to be in person. The Chamber received a large donation to their scholarship fund and they are very thankful for that. Ms. Battos asked Ms. Hilyard if the Chamber has been hearing if businesses are having difficulties recruiting employees. Ms. Hilyard said that is something they are hearing and are working on a few programs that they hope will offer assistance.

c) Oral Report from Business & Career Center Coordinator

Mr. Sherman gave an update on the Simsbury Public Library and how they are planning for the extension of hours open to the public. Sherm informed the group the BRCC is seeing an increase in offers and interviews but is seeing a struggle for businesses to fill part-time employment as mentioned by Ms. Battos and Ms. Hilyard.

d) Other

None

2) 2020-2021 Work Plan Updates

a) Marketing

Ms. Nielsen, Ms. Seavy and Ms. Freeman gave updates on the Marketing work being done. They updated the group on the two focus groups they held, one was for Builders & Realtors and the other was for those in the Food & Hospitality industry. They shared interesting findings they heard from both focus group meetings; the number one reason being cited as why people choose to move/live here is our quality of life such as parks, trails, Simsbury Farms, etc. and the number two reason being the quality of our schools system.

b) Co-working Spaces/Supporting Entrepreneurs

Mr. Jodice updated the group on conversations he has had with Ms. Hilyard about co-working spaces in town. There was discussion about the logistics of the creation of a website that will allow landlords to offer co-working space they have for rent and for workers to rent those spaces including where to host that website and some preliminary URLs that could be used.

Ms. Wagner shared that she would like to see the website kept centrally in case of turnover at the EDC, Main Street, the Chamber or the Town. This way there will be continuity on co-working spaces in town no matter who is here. The group agreed that would be important.

c) Business Outreach

Mr. Crowther said that he has reached out the EDC members via email asking them to identify which business outreach visits they would like to attend. Ms. Battos asked if the meetings were planned to be virtual, Mr. Crowther said for now they are but the ones later in the year could be in person.

d) Other

None

3) Proposed Modifications to Industrial Zone Regulations

Mr. Glidden informed the group of the proposed updates to the Industrial Zone Regulations and how the Zoning Commission has requested the EDC's thoughts prior to the Zoning Commission's next meeting.

EDC members gave feedback on the proposed modifications including asking the Zoning Commission to consider allowing educational centers such as meeting space, daycare/childcare centers, and educational purposes.

4) Liaison Updates

a) Zoning

Mr. Jodice informed the group of Zoning's review of current regulations and proposing updates.

b) Design Review

None

c) Sustainability

None

d) Development Projects

None

e) Other

None

5) Minutes March 24, 2021

Mr. Earl made a motion to approve the minutes for the March 24, 2021 meeting as presented. Ms. Wagner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Ms. Seavy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:31pm. Mr. Earl seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Fitzgerald
Management Specialist