



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes - ADOPTED

Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 5:30pm
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:30pm. Commission members Bob Crowther, Peter Van Loon, Ron Jodice, Charmaine Seavy and Tom Earl were present. Ex officio members Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Bill Rice (Planning Commission) and Jackie Battos (Board of Selectmen), were also present. Staff members in attendance included Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, Andrew 'Sherm' Sherman, Business Resource Center Coordinator and Thomas Fitzgerald, Management Specialist. Guest Morgan Hilyard (Chamber of Commerce) was also present.

1) Development Update

Mr. Glidden led the group through a presentation on development happening in Town. Some items discussed were various residential developments as well as an independent living facility. Mr. Glidden also provided a comparison of March through May permit activity for both 2019 and 2020 to show the group the year to year comparisons. Even during the COVID global pandemic building permit activity has remained steady. Finally Mr. Glidden shared the updated preliminary FEMA Flood maps and noted that these will affect more people this year due to elevation and floodplain limits changing.

2) Business Recovery

a) Temporary Outdoor Dining for Restaurants

Mr. Glidden gave an update to the Commission on outdoor dining in Town. He encouraged the public to visit the locations that are open to outdoor dining but to please adhere to the guidelines.

b) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen was not present at the meeting but sent notes to Town Manager Maria Capriola to be read. The Main Street Partnership is working with the business community to help with any needs they may have. They are also working to assist a new business with opening and an existing business on a façade update.

c) Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Hilyard reported that businesses in town are eager to reopen but has heard that customers are still typically apprehensive to indoor shopping/activities. Ms. Hilyard noted that there is an incredible local collaboration between businesses in Town to help each other, and is hopeful that this continues even after COVID is no longer present and times return to normal. Ms. Hilyard noted that there are significant expenses involved with reopening one's business and that while all businesses are hurting; depending on the industry of the business the effect of the pandemic is felt on a varying scale. It was also stated that smaller businesses are having trouble with employees

not wanting to return to work. Ms. Hilyard stated she hasn't heard too many complaints about the business loan program.

d) Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian

Mr. Sherman reported on what he and the Library have been doing during the shutdown. Mr. Sherman stated he has seen a reduction in inquiries since the initial pandemic uptick occurred, and sees this as a positive for hopefully slowly returning to normalcy. He also informed the group that smaller lenders have been more helpful for the business loan program over larger banks for many of the small businesses in Town. He went on to say why he believes this to be true. Mr. Sherman has seen a small amount of requests for job/resume help and expects this to pick up once places are able to open up again and start to hire back their workforces.

Mr. Van Loon discussed his research regarding Co-Working spaces. Mr. Crowther and Mr. Van Loon asked about Co-Working spaces potentially being desired due to people being tired of working at home but offices still not opening. Ms. Hilyard informed the group that at a previous stop in her career she had experience with Co-Working spaces and would be happy to assist; Mr. Van Loon and Ms. Hilyard will connect to discuss.

e) CCM Request for Town Response Plan

A meeting about a possible Long Term Recovery Committee was held. It was determined that a separate committee is not needed due to staff and other boards and commissions already working on what the Long Term Recovery Committee would be tasked with.

Mr. Crowther is working on a spreadsheet of contacts for businesses, non-profits, education institutions, religious institutions, etc. to get their key contacts and see how their recovery efforts are going. Other Commission members offered to assist.

3) Minutes

a) May 20, 2020

Mr. Jodice made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Van Loon seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald,
Management Specialist