



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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

Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 5:30pm
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:31pm. Commission members Bob Crowther, Tom Earl, and Ron Jodice were present. Ex officio members Jackie Battos (Selectwoman) and Bill Rice (Planning Commission) were 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, was also present.

1) Business Recovery

a) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership

Mr. Crowther read a statement from Ms. Nielsen in her absence. Main Street is working with the Farmington Valley VNA to coordinate flu clinics for businesses, and is continuing to arrange PPE for businesses. The outdoor dining group met this week to discuss the extension. The small business roundtable with the Lieutenant Governor and State Representative went well. Ms. Nielsen is also working with Ava Grace on an event.

b) Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Hilyard reiterated that there was great discussion at the small business roundtable regarding business needs during this time. She said that the Chamber had a very successful golf tournament, which was a joint event with the Granby Chamber of Commerce. She reported that there has been an increase in new members for the Chamber. Ms. Hilyard noted that it has been encouraging to see how creative businesses have become in this new environment, and how they have been able to adapt and recreate the way they do business. She informed the group that the Art Trail will be closing on 10/5, with a closing ceremony to take place on 10/6. She is working with the Performing Arts Center and the Culture, Parks and Recreation Department on a drive-through trick-or-treat event on 10/18.

c) Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian

Mr. Sherman informed the group that the Library will have a limited reopening on 10/6. He reminded the group that the Business Resource Center has been rebranded

as the Business and Career Center. He said he is continuing to send out COVID-related announcements that pertain to the business community. He reported that the largest number of inquiries that he is fielding are in regards to what is available for unemployment.

d) Outreach to Stakeholders

There were no new updates.

2) 2019-2020 EDC Annual Report

Mr. Crowther said that he will be presenting the report to the Board of Selectmen on 10/14. He walked through the draft slides that were provided in the packet; there were no suggested changes from the group.

3) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates

a) Marketing

The FY20 funds for this project were approved to be rolled over into FY21. Ms. Freeman, Ms. Seavy, and Ms. Nielsen will be meeting to discuss the scope of work.

b) Co-working Spaces

Mr. Crowther read a statement from Mr. Van Loon in his absence. Mr. Van Loon had provided an updated outline on this project, and noted that it included feedback from Ms. Hilyard and others. He said that the next step is to reach out to landlords to gauge interest. Discussion ensued regarding the need to have a central database for all available spaces. Ms. Hilyard said that she would be reaching out to her members and other contacts to figure out what the interest level is. She noted that we will need the other members of the team to reach out to their contacts as well.

c) Business Outreach

Ms. Capriola said that the Town Manager's Office has begun working on rescheduling the visits that were missed due to COVID restrictions. She reminded the group that if any members are interested in teaming up to conduct outreach to smaller businesses, the Town Manager's Office can assist with scheduling and providing a list of questions/discussion topics to use on the visits.

d) Business Incentive Policy

The draft policy needs to be finalized prior to presenting to the Board of Selectmen. The work team will get together to finalize the draft, and will bring it before the Board this fall.

4) Recovery-Friendly Community Initiative

Ms. Capriola reminded that group that if anyone is interested in getting involved with this initiative, they should let her know and she will connect them with Lisa Gray at A Promise to Jordan.

5) Update on Assigning EDC Members to Development Projects

The group decided that this effort will best be handled on a project-by-project basis, due to the fact that projects are not for public disclosure until applications are filed. Discussion ensued regarding the need to approach this without being perceived as advocating for any particular project as it moves through the regulatory process.

6) Minutes – August 26, 2020

This item was tabled due to lack of a quorum.

Mr. Crowther reported that the vacant slot on the commission was posted. Ms. Capriola noted that we are looking for someone who is a business owner, preferably in Simsbury.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager