

Simsbury Economic Development Commission
TOWN OF SIMSBURY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 7:30AM
Simsbury Town Hall – Main Meeting Room
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut

PRESENT: Chairman Mark Deming, Kristen Barnett, David Balboni (8:15AM), Carolyn Bligh, James Devivo (7:45AM), Louis George, Allan Raphael, Selectman Sean Askham, Director of Administrative Services Thomas Cooke.

ABSENT: Christopher Meile, Charles Minor.

The proceedings were recorded digitally and copies are available through Simsbury Town Hall.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Mark Deming called the meeting to order at 7:33AM.

2. REVIEW OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 10, 2015 MINUTES:

MOTION: Mr. Allan Raphael, Mr. Louis George second, **to approve the December 10, 2015 Minutes; unanimously approved.**

3. BUDGET DISCUSSION AND VOTE:

Commissioners discussed the current proposed budget of \$69,145, noting it was comprised of the following: \$200 for miscellaneous office supplies, \$1000 for part-time help/clerk, \$7500 for website, \$6,445 for Tourism, \$4,000 for the Farmington Valley Visitor's Association, and \$50,000 for Simsbury Main Street Partnership. Mr. Deming reminded commissioners that Tourism was being transferred into EDC's budget this year. Ms. Kristen Barnett questioned whether the allocation for the website were for consulting hours or current staff hours. Director of Administrative Services Thomas Cooke clarified that this figure represents the development of maintenance of the website, not support. Discussion ensued regarding the Simsbury Main Street Partnership and its website.

Mr. Deming suggested that all members review the EDC website as the next meeting will be devoted to reviewing it and discussing changes members may want to see.

Mr. Cooke provided an update on his research into the history of the Infrastructure Support Fund. Copies of a memorandum from him to Mr. Deming, dated January 12, 2016, regarding this was provided to all commissioners with excerpts read aloud by Mr. Cooke. He noted it was a bond issued for \$500K to create an infrastructure fund which was used for private development that had an impact on public space or public utility. He noted that among the projects that benefited from this fund was Maple Tree Plaza receiving \$10,735.68 for costs associated with replacement of a sanitary sewer. He also noted that Holloways received \$56,150 in 2004 for the differential between a 30" and 54" drainage pipe installed during the construction of an eight thousand square foot retail building and that construction costs of \$75,423 were reimbursed to Fiddler's Green in 2006. Mr. Cooke reported that his research also confirmed that this fund has indeed been exhausted. Commissioners discussed models for creating a new fund.

Mr. James Devivo noted that in reflecting on the possible size of the fund and possible uses of the fund, one thing that had come to mind is the CT GIG project. He questioned whether there was any idea as to the commitment of the town and if there is interest, whether this fund might be a suitable use for that. Discussion followed regarding that project.

Commissioners circled back to discussing the maintenance of the Main Street Partnership website, specifically the need to keep it updated. Additionally, they agreed that keeping an updated, comprehensive central calendar for the town should become a priority. They agreed that this would be the ideal way for organizers of town wide, non-profit events to submit for upload, to one designated individual, and residents and/or visitors should be able to access one website to find a complete community calendar.

MOTION: Mr. Louis George, Mr. Devivo second, **to approve the budget of \$69,145 to include the caveat attached to the request from Simsbury Main Street Partnership that their website be maintained on a current basis to include calendar events and content; unanimously approved.**

MOTION: Ms. Barnett, Allan Raphael second, **to recommend to the First Selectman funding \$250,000.00 with an additional funding mechanism, on an ongoing basis, to maintain the Infrastructure Fund at an appropriate level from year to year; Motion passed with Ms. Barnett, Ms. Bligh, Mr. Devivo, Mr. George, Mr. Raphael voting aye while Mr. David Balboni opposed.**

Selectman Sean Askham noted that it is likely the Board of Selectman would call a joint meeting with the EDC to discuss the details and parameters of this proposed fund.

Ms. Barnett requested that Mr. Cooke share with the EDC the date that their budget will be presented to the Board of Selectman for budget discussion.

4. REPORTS – FVVA, SMSP:

On behalf of the Farmington Valley Visitors Association, Executive Director Nancy Anstey provided the commission with a brief status report noting that they are in the middle of their membership drive. Ms. Anstey reported that on January 7, 2016, she participated in a tourism roundtable discussion initiated by U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal. She noted that concerns, as related to Connecticut tourism, were discussed and noted that airports were among one of the greatest concerns.

5. WEBSITE UPDATE:

Planning Commission Chairman Ferg Jansen noted the newly updated town website and praised the efforts of the responsible parties. Mr. Cooke noted that the next regular meeting of the EDC will provide an opportunity to review and share feedback of the EDC page and make recommendations for modifications, if any.

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS, DISCUSSION:

It was noted that the three task forces that are recommended currently are Marketing, Infrastructure, and Process. Mr. Cooke reported that Town Counsel Bob DeCrescenzo will be working with Town Planner James Rabbitt on training for Planning and Zoning members. FOI training and Newly-Elected training is coming up on January 22, 2016. He noted that Mr. Rabbitt is also planning more specific training over time to be built into both Planning and Zoning meetings, as determined by their respective chairs. Mr. Cooke also reported that the Charter Revision Commission voted at their last meeting not to combine the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission.

7. OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Raphael spoke regarding a Cumberland Farms renovation that occurred last year wherein the owner had appeared before the commission with a presentation and had shared some obstacles he had faced in his permitting process with the Planning Department. Mr. Raphael recalled that the owner had promised to bring down the price of gasoline and acknowledged that this owner has indeed done so.

Mr. Balboni commented on the latest announcement of GE leaving the state of Connecticut.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Mr. Raphael, Mr. George second, **to adjourn at 8:51AM; unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela Colombie,
Recording Clerk**