

From: Lois Laczko February 11, 2011 4:21:50 PM
Subject: Economic Development Commission Minutes 01/13/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_EconMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
January 13, 2011
REGULAR MEETING

1. Call To Order

Chairman Deming called the Regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 7:30 AM in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Commission members Chuck Minor, Nancy Haase, Gary Dornbush and Lou George were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of December 9, 2010

Commissioner George made a motion to approve the December 9, 2010 minutes as written. Commissioner Haase seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Budget Discussion: SMSP, FVVA

Ms. Anstey, Farmington Valley Visitors Association, stated that they were formed in 1994. They currently represent seven Towns. They are a private, non-profit organization and are funded by membership dues, fundraising efforts and donations; they do not get any State or Federal funding. The Farmington Valley Visitors Association serves as a resource for residents; relocation and visitor center; and they promote the Valley as a desirable place to work, live and visit.

Ms. Anstey stated that 70,000 guides were put out last year; approximately 150 relocation packets were sent out last year as well. She stated that their web hits totaled 747,531, which is significantly higher than previous years.

In response to a question from Chairman Deming, Ms. Anstey stated that the budget for the FVVA last year was \$93,200; this year's budget will be \$92,350. In the past, Simsbury's Economic Development Commission has given

\$4,000 to FVVA; this request has not increased since 1994.

Ms. Anstey stated that FVVA directly benefits the Town of Simsbury and its businesses through the guide, website and newsletter. She also reviewed upcoming events that FVVA is involved in, including the Barn Tour; DreamRide; Antique Car Show; and a Bike, Walk and Run.

Ms. Anstey thanked the Commission for their past support. She stated that again, the FVVA is requesting \$4,000 from Simsbury's EDC.

Ms. Nielsen stated that Main Street Partnership has had a great year. Simsbury was nominated and received the designation for being one of the Dozen Distinctive Destination. She stated that Main Street is an organization that the Town sees a return on their investment. The Town saw a return of more than \$4 back for every dollar spent.

Ms. Nielsen discussed what Main Street Partnership has accomplished this year, including: receiving a \$90,000 grant for the Town of Simsbury to make capital improvements at Eno Memorial Hall; a \$10,000 grant for the Charrette; an \$8,000 grant for the Design Guidelines for the Charrette; educational programs; Farmer's Market; on-site vending for the TMMF; fundraised to restore the clock; and working on design of the streetscape. She stated that this is all economic development. Ms. Nielsen stated that Main Street has also worked to retain and grow their existing business base and to recruit new businesses. They will be holding the Business Capital Expo again this year as well.

Ms. Nielsen stated that Main Street's website has increased. This website is not only a place for businesses to promote Simsbury but it is also a calendar and a very useful website for residents.

Ms. Nielsen stated that last year, the Economic Development Commission gave \$50,000 to Main Street Partnership. They are requesting \$50,000 again this year.

Chairman Deming stated that in the past, the Economic Development Commission has had to make a request of the Board of Selectmen on an item by item basis. Commissioner George stated that there is money available, although it is not within the EDC's discretion as to how it is spent. He stated that the EDC needs to discuss if they should request monies stating that it is a priority for this Commission to be able to do various things within its own discretion.

4. Status of Town Center Code and Rte 10 Corridor Study

Mr. Peck stated that there will be a piece on SCTV in the near future

regarding how the Route 10 Corridor Study is progressing. He stated that there will be another Steering Committee meeting tonight.

Regarding the Town Center Code, Mr. Peck stated that the revisions have been sent back to Code Studio. The Town should receive the final revised draft tomorrow, which will be circulated to all of the Boards and Commissions.

5. Real Estate Assessment Process: David Gardner

Mr. Gardner stated that the Town is required to do a revaluation every five years; properties have to be inspected every ten years. He stated that they do maintenance every year to keep the records current. On average, the residential assessments are approximately 70% of the sale price, although there is quite a bit of variation. Mr. Gardner stated that he estimates this year's revaluation and inspections to be approximately \$500,000.

Commissioner Dornbush questioned if the Town could get a deferment on the revaluation. Mr. Gardner stated that he believes the provisions for a deferment have expired. Commissioner Dornbush stated that he did not think spending \$500,000 on the revaluation study was an advisable expenditure at this time in the circumstances. He believes that salary increases arising under the new Teachers' Union contract (and other union contracts negotiated this year) will place pressure on the Town's current year's budget. The money would be better utilized to offset such increases. He also believes that the State should be receptive to the Town's request for a two to three year deferral in light of current economic conditions. He pointed out that property values have declined dramatically in recent years with no appreciable economic growth in town and therefore the revaluation process is not likely to yield any major changes in overall valuation of the Grand List.

6. Old Business/New Business

Chairman Deming stated that the cost for the Developer's Showcase will be \$450. This will need to be a request to the Board of Selectmen. He questioned what additional money is needed in order to promote the PAD and Town Center Zone. Commissioner Minor stated that the Commission needs to submit their requests along with a plan. Commissioner Haase stated that she believes this Commission should be involved in the Developer's Showcase as well as doing articles in the New England Real Estate Journal/newspapers to market the PAD and Town Center Code.

Commissioner George stated that, at the last meeting, they discussed having a meeting with the Chamber and other groups to talk about the successes

that Simsbury has had. After having a plan along with estimates, they can then go to the Board of Selectmen to make a request for monies.

Ms. Nielsen asked that the EDC also request monies for funding the Design Guidelines. There was discussion regarding the amount that should be requested. They decided to put in a request for \$5,000 for the purpose of the guidelines.

Chairman Deming stated that he will be requesting an additional \$7,900 for specific requests. He stated that the budget request for the EDC for FY 11/12 is now \$62,800, which includes FVVA, SMP, the itemized list, and clerical. Commissioner George stated that he would like to include the Metro Hartford Alliance's basic membership. The Board agreed to request this money and to have MHA come and make a presentation to the Commission. Chairman Deming stated that this would bring the budget request to \$67,000.

Commissioner Dornbush made a motion to approve the budget request of \$67,000. Commissioner Minor seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Chairman Deming stated that he has requested a meeting between the EDC, Board of Selectmen, Town staff and the Water Pollution Control Authority in order to explore if the WPCA can create a flow rate charge in lieu of the one-time hook up fee for all new construction that fall into a PAD or within the Town Center.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Haase made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 a.m. Commissioner George seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.