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ADOPTED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING  
FEBRUARY 5, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER

Thomas Frank, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 7:30 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Mark Deming, Louis George, Nancy Haase, Alan Needham, Derek Peterson and Alan Levesque. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, and other interested parties.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of JANUARY 8, 2009

Nancy Haase made a motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2009. The motion was seconded by Alan Levesque and unanimously passed with Chairman Frank abstaining.

3. STATUS REPORTS – CHARRETTE, WEB SITE AND SIGN GROUP

Chairman Frank said that he is a member of the Charrette subcommittee, and discussed the current status of the Charrette. The First Selectman advised the sub-committee that, in her view, the probability of getting sufficient funds approved in the new financial year to do a full Charrette, even if it is limited to Town Center, are very low. Chairman Frank said that they will not know how the Board of Finance will rule on this until the Board of Selectmen finishes its budget deliberations. In the meantime, First Selectman Glassman found an amount of \$40,000 in the Town budget in unspent consulting money. Mrs. Glassman said to the Charrette subcommittee that they should see what they can get from Dover Kohl (leading service provider on the project) to get started on a town center Charrette type activity. Instead of doing the whole thing, do part of it with the \$40,000 and then if more funds become available in the new financial year they could proceed to extend the work. Chairman Frank said that Dover Kohl was asked by Hiram Peck to do a certain amount of preliminary start up work on the Charrette

process for a fee of \$40,000. Dover Kohl responded by saying that they could not do what they were being asked to do for \$40,000, but could do some of it. Chairman Frank said another \$30,000 has now been found in another budget so there is now talk again with Dover Kohl and the possibility of spending \$70,000 to do startup work on a Charrette that is limited to town center. This would come out of the current year's budget. The Charrette is still an active issue, but Chairman Frank said that it is likely that any work that is done on it will be limited and extended over a long period of time. A member asked what the time frame is if Dover Kohl is engaged to do the Charrette. Chairman Frank said that the idea was that the work would start in the spring. A member asked what the expected return to the Town is for that amount of money. Chairman Frank said that the best way to get an answer to that question is to read the documentation as it is complex and technical. It also involves some studies, etc. that Dover Kohl would do. Commissioner Peterson asked if there had been any discussion as to where the first \$40,000 came from, and also where the \$30,000 came from. He asked if this came from people's budgets or was it simply taking what had been reduced from Commissions budgets and adding it to the Charrette initiative. He asked if all the Commissions have weighed in on the Charrette, especially if it was taken from their budgets. Chairman Frank said that he personally could not answer that question and that it should be directed to the First Selectman. Commissioner Haase said that the first \$40,000 came from monies allocated to consulting, but she did not know where the additional \$30,000 came from.

Commissioner Haase gave a status report on web site development saying she had emailed the commission members what she had put together. She said that the decision has already been made to not spend any cash to create a web site. They are in the restriction of what Virtual Town Hall can do, but there is a little bit of an upgrade. She met with Kevin Crimmins to talk about what they want to include on the web site (the content aspect). Commissioner Haase asked if there were any suggestions as to how they laid it out. She explained about opening up the main page and the major headings for links, which also get broken down further into more links. Chairman Frank suggested that if any commission member has any comments about this work as it develops to send them to Rick Bazzano.

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Commissioner Needham discussed the status of the Sign Group. The Sign Group consists of people from Main Street Partnership, Howard Beach, The Chamber of Commerce, Rich Correia and Alan Needham. The Sign Group would like EDC to participate in Sign Awareness Month in April. They would like some type of up beat document to send to local merchants about what the sign regulations are. He said that there are a lot of complaints about A-Frame

signs in town and this would be a move to try and control that problem. Eventually there will be a sign that will be preferred, and merchants will be given an opportunity to purchase the preferred sign if they want to. The sign will be aesthetically pleasing and efficient. Commissioner Needham also said that they would like signage that would state "why to shop in Simsbury". There would not be any expense to the Town on either of these. The Chamber and Main Street will distribute the signs. Commissioner Needham asked the Commission to email him any input. A member asked if this process would overall the current Town sign regulations. Commissioner Needham said that there are two points; one point is that this is a gentle reminder of what the regulations are and the second point is to contact Howard Beach about any recommendations you have with the new sign regulations.

#### 4. DISCUSSION – AGENDA FOR MARCH 12, 2009 MEETING

Chairman Frank discussed the agenda for their next meeting. He suggested spending some time talking about what they should be talking about. How they can best use the time with the energy and talent that is in this Commission during the meetings. He suggested three items: 1) talk about a Economic Development Plan workshop or have a Special Meeting for this Commission to talk about what they could do usefully to put together the framework for an Economic Development Plan to present to the Town; 2) review the Zoning Regulations and discuss the developer unfriendly issue; etc.; and 3) airport study. Relating to suggested item 3 Chairman Frank read a letter he received from Brandon Robertson, Director of Administrative Services, regarding the draft airport study.

#### 5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION – DEVELOPERS SHOWCASE 2009

Chairman Frank said that he received an email from Hiram Peck with the information on the Developers Showcase 2009. This event is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford.

At this point in the meeting Chairman Frank turned the chair over to Mark Deming, Vice Chairman, as he had to leave the meeting to get to class by 9:30.

Chairman Deming asked the members if the Commission should participate once again and to what degree. A member said that they have had a table at this event for a number of years now. Commissioner Haase said that she believes that they had discussed this a little at their last meeting and because of the budget had discussed not getting a table. Chairman Deming asked Mr. Peck if he had received any feedback from anyone on their presence at this event last year. Mr. Peck said that he has been at the last two and thought there was a lot of good feedback from people who came by. He also said that this time around their attendance is a good idea. Chairman Deming mentioned

that two years ago they had a large presence there and it was very noticeable. Also, a couple of awards had been given to people in the town. He said last year was less attended with fewer booths. If it is going to again be at that level, he does not know if it worth their having a booth as they would have to get together handouts, displays, different project boards, etc. As there is not any money in their budge, Chairman Deming said that if they are going to go to the event, they should request funds from the First Selectman's Office so the Commission can sign up for the Developers Showcase. Commissioner Haase said that with a booth they would get two tickets included for the event, but they will be requesting funding just to show up. The cost is approximately \$50.00 per person to attend. If they decide to request a booth, the additional cost is approximately \$450.00 for the booth. Commissioner Haase said if they have a booth possibly Main Street Partnership could lend them some displays, and Riverview could lend them their trade show display. A suggestion was made that if Main Street Partnership or Rich Correia would go in on a booth with the Town, the cost of the booth could be split. Chairman Deming said that they would defer their decision as to whether they will attend and whether they will attend with a booth to their next meeting, which is March 12th.

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##### 6. NEW BUSINESS

An audience member discussed the zoning application that is going to be heard on Monday, February 9th, on the restaurant at Simsbury Farms going for an alcoholic beverage (beer and wine) license. He said that the Selectmen have voted unanimously to approve it and have now referred this to the Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Haase made a motion that the Economic Development Commission draft a letter addressed to the Zoning Commission in support of a beer and wine license approval for the operator of the restaurant located at Simsbury Farms. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson and passed unanimously.

##### 7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Haase made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 a.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and passed unanimously.

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Thomas Frank, Chairman