

From: Lois Laczko March 4, 2010 9:52:39 AM
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To: SimsburyCT_EconMin
Cc:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
February 11, 2010
REGULAR MEETING

1. Call To Order

Chairman Deming called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 7:33 AM in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Commission members Kevin Crimmins, Lou George, Chuck Minor, Derek Peterson, Alan Needham, and Nancy Haase were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of January 14, 2010

Several edits were made to the minutes

Commissioner George made a motion to approve the January 14, 2010 minutes as amended. Commissioner Peterson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Report of EDC budget discussion with the BOS, Kevin Crimmins

Commissioner Crimmins stated that the recent Board of Selectmen meeting was limited to Main Street Partnership asking for their budget requests. Main Street gave the Board of Selectmen a condensed version of the presentation they gave to the Economic Development Commission. He stated that their requests were better received from this Commission. A lot of the money that Main Street is requesting is for the Distinctive Designations announcement, which they were not willing to disclose.

Commissioner Haase stated that Main Street has since gotten more specific regarding their information. Their request has also decreased substantially.

Commissioner George stated that from an Economic Development Commission perspective, this Commission does not have a budget. If there is anything that they would like to do, they need to request this from the Board of Selectmen. Chairman Deming stated that the MHA membership may be taken out

of the budget; the Economic Development Commission may need to make a separate request for this. Commissioner George questioned when this Commission would have an opportunity to talk in support of what they are requesting. Chairman Deming stated that he has e-mailed Mr. Peck their requests.

4. Status of the PAD and Charrette

Mr. Peck stated that the public hearing for the PAD Regulation has been set for March 15th. The Regulation has been sent to the Council of Governments and has also been referred to the Planning Commission. He distributed a copy of the draft Regulation to the Commission members. After the public hearing the Zoning Commission could adopt the regulation as presented, modify and adopt the regulation or they could deny the regulation.

Commissioner Minor questioned if the Zoning Commission modified the regulation in any way, would another public hearing need to be held. Mr. Peck stated that if the changes are not significant, another public hearing would not need to be held.

Mr. Peck stated that the Charrette Subcommittee recently met. He stated that the Town has received the Regulating Plan from the consultant. This is a street based zoning map. They have also received a series of diagrams regarding what the structures along Hopmeadow Street would look like. The idea is to have the structures up front on the street with parking behind the buildings.

Mr. Peck stated that the consultant would like input from the Boards and Commissions prior to them coming back to Town. He stated that the Town's goal is to make sure that the product of the Charrette works in concert with the PAD Regulation, should that be adopted. The Incentive Housing Zone is also currently being finished. He stated that all of these things are different tools that can be selected for a project.

Commissioner Minor questioned when the public hearings would be held for Charrette. Mr. Peck stated that he is hopeful that a final draft would be submitted to the Town in March and a public hearing could possibly be set also for March.

Commissioner Peterson suggested that this Commission discuss and take a position on the PAD Regulation prior to the March 15th public hearing. The Commission members agreed. Chairman Deming stated that this issue will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Chairman Deming questioned if the Town wanted to participate in the

Real Estate Exchange; the cost is \$250. Mr. Peck stated that he feels that this event is of value. If the money can be found, he feels it would be worth attending. He stated that this event has shrunk over the years, which is his only concern. He stated that more information will be needed to see where the event will take place and to make sure it will be worthwhile. Chairman Deming stated that he will look into this.

Chairman Deming stated that he attended a meeting with Mr. Peck, Sarah Nielsen and Mary Glassman regarding events in Town and the affect they have on the merchants. He stated that there will be new permitting, which will have a parking map. This map will indicate where people can and cannot park. Also, there will be a common calendar so the merchants will know about upcoming events. Chairman Deming stated that the all-day weekend events tended to be the more problematic events, although if the parking could be controlled, he feels that this will help the merchants.

Commissioner George questioned who would be determining the parking for events. Chairman Deming stated that there is a map that will be helpful in letting people know where people can park for events. Mr. Peck stated that Gerry Toner and the Police Department will also be helping with this. He stated that they already know where parking issues have been in the past for merchants, which they will be focusing on. He stated that they will be working with the merchants that have had issues in the past. Ms. Nielsen stated that the volunteer parking is what is hurting the merchants; they will need to make sure that the volunteers are not taking up merchant parking.

Ms. Nielsen stated that the issue of fairgrounds still needs to be looked at; this could mean that the events and shops could co-exist peacefully. Commissioner George stated that he feels that this is the key component to the whole downtown. He feels that this needs to be included into the Charrette.

Commissioner Peterson questioned if there are workshops being held for the Incentive Housing Zone study. Mr. Peck stated that there has been a draft regulation submitted. The consultant is currently working on design guidelines for this. Mr. Peck feels that the State needs to approve the Town's regulations even if the payments to the Town are not moving forward.

Chairman Deming stated that a letter was sent to the Hartford thanking them for their commitment to Simsbury. Another letter was sent to the Zoning Commission regarding the draft PAD Regulation.

5. Reports: SMSP, FVVA

Ms. Anstey stated that their website hits went up in the last month. There are also an additional 1,000 requests for their Winter Getaway Package brochures. She stated that she continues to work on the Dreamride publicity.

Ms. Anstey stated that last week, they had the unveiling of their film website. Their web address is FarmingtonValleyFilm.org. She stated that they had a big crowd at this event. There is a production guide and photo gallery, directory, and the permit process on their new website. The website is also very user friendly.

Ms. Anstey stated that there have already been four submissions since the website was launched. They have also had several articles in the newspaper regarding the Film Commission and they also get publicity on Facebook.

Chairman Deming questioned if there were any film programs at any colleges or universities in Connecticut. Ms. Banco stated that Quinnipiac does have a program; they have training sessions. She stated that she is also hearing about groups that would like to start programs throughout the State.

Regarding Simsbury Tourism, Ms. Banco stated that they have been around since 1994. They started as a Committee in order to get people involved that wanted to bring economic development to Simsbury. She stated that they are a volunteer Committee; they have a small budget of approximately \$2,500 per year.

Ms. Banco distributed Hopmeadow Brochures; Farms Brochure; bookmarks; and postcards which Simsbury Tourism has created.

Ms. Banco stated that the Simsbury Tourism Committee does not currently have a home building; a small space on Hopmeadow Street would be most desirable. She stated that a small open structure on Iron Horse Boulevard may be an option for the spring and summer. She stated that they have also been utilizing the Simsbury Public Library. They do have a phone line at the Town Hall and they do leave their brochures at different locations in Town.

Ms. Banco stated that their website is vital to the Simsbury Tourism Committee. Restaurants and hotels are updated; links are on the site also.

Ms. Banco stated that the Simsbury Tourism Committee would like to do a Fall Foliage Tour, which they are currently working on. They would also like to do an EcoTourism Event. She stated that they will be doing a volunteer expo like they did last year, which was very successful. This

event will be held on April 28th at Eno Memorial Hall.

Ms. Nielsen stated that Main Street is using Distinctive Destinations as leverage in travel magazines. They have a Connecticut Main Street Day event coming up that will be held on February 23rd. She encouraged the Economic Development Commission members to attend. Ms. Nielsen stated that the Connecticut Small Business Day is on February 24th. Main Street is also working on the first steps to putting together a local community loan pool. She stated that they have already approached two banks in order to start discussions. As they explore this, she would like to include the Economic Development Commission members.

6. Old Business / New Business: Metro Hartford Alliance,
Assessor Research

Chairman Deming stated that there was an initial meeting with the Assessor regarding the illustrative framework on what the Town tax would look like if it began to shift more to commercial/industrial and what this would require in additional square footage for the Town of Simsbury. He stated that the Assessor will be working on this in the near future.

Chairman Deming stated that the PAD Regulation will be placed on the next agenda for discussion. He stated that he would also like to discuss Simsbury Meadows and have Mr. Sawitzke come in to talk and look at the work that has already been done and start laying the foundation for how the Town should look at this piece of land and how it would be integrated back into the downtown in a more useful fashion.

Regarding parking for events in the Town Center, Commissioner Crimmins stated that he would like to have a more detailed presentation regarding how this will work.

Regarding the public gathering permit, Commissioner George stated that he has concern that if an event has alcohol sales, people will not go in as early to an event. He feels that people will stay out in the parking lots when there is a concert that sells alcohol. Commissioner Crimmins stated that there are a lot of issues that need to be resolved, although he feels that a resolution will be difficult or impossible if discussions regarding the events that take place on the west side of Iron Horse Boulevard with discussions regarding how to deal with alcohol and events happening within the Performing Arts Center. Although these involve the same physical area, he feels that these are two completely different problems.

Regarding the PAD Regulation, Commissioner George stated that there was discussion regarding transfer of public benefit. Mr. Peck stated that this is an issue that is not clear. Commissioner George stated that he would

vote against this Regulation because transfer of public benefit is not in the draft regulation. He stated that this issue should not be ignored. Mr. Peck stated that a recommendation for adding transfer of public benefit instead of voting against the Regulation would be helpful.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Crimmins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 a.m. Commissioner George seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.