

From: Lois Laczko May 12, 2011 9:43:06 AM  
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To: SimsburyCT\_EconMin  
Cc:

ADOPTED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
APRIL 14, 2011 MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mark Deming, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Simsbury Economic Development Commission to order at 7:30 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Town Offices. The following members were present: Louis George, Chuck Minor, Kevin Crimmins, Derek Peterson, Andrew Markowski, Timothy Ellsworth, and Todd Burrick. Also in attendance was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning (arriving later in the meeting), and other interested parties.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF March 10, 2011

A Commissioner moved to approve as presented the minutes of March 10, 2011. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

3. WELCOME NEW EDC COMMISSIONERS:

- Todd Burrick
- Timothy Ellsworth
- Andrew Markowski

Chairman Deming asked the new members to introduce themselves.

- Andy Markowski said that he is recently appointed and happy to serve. He is an Attorney who works as a Lobbyist in Hartford representing several business groups and interests. He said that he is looking forward to helping out with economic development.
- Tim Ellsworth said that he worked for Ensign Bickford starting in 1964 in a variety of different capacities. He is currently a Director. He also is involved in the real estate partnership that owns the Shops in Farmington Valley in Canton. Mr. Ellsworth said that he runs a small furniture design company.
- Todd Burrick said that he has lived in town for 15 years. He is an Attorney who never practiced because he has been an Actuary for the last 25

years. Mr. Burrick said that he presently works at an insurance company in Farmington.

4. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIRMAN

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

5. REPORTS: SMSP, FVVA

Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director, Main Street Partnership, explained what Main Street Partnership does to the new members. She said that Main Street Partnership is not just used by existing businesses, or is it just for creating new businesses, it also includes things like the physical atmosphere of the business environment such as if there is enough parking, if there is enough signage, etc. Also, they do special events marketing. Ms. Nielsen, said that they had worked with the Town on the Charrette in the subsequent Center Zone Regulations, and is pleased that it has been passed. Ms. Nielsen said that they had been involved in the Charrette process since the beginning and they also wrote a grant for \$10,000 which helped bring Code Studio back four times to work with the Land Use Commissions. She said that they have also written an \$8,000 grant and that will go towards the final piece of the Charrette, which are the Design Guidelines. She thinks that this is a critical piece as well because now that there are new zoning regulations, they want to make it as easy as possible to get the right kind of development in town down, to get the density that is needed.

Ms. Nielsen said that on Tuesday, in the State of Connecticut, Governor Malloy declared it Connecticut Main Street Center Day. She said that for the State of Connecticut, Connecticut Main Street Center is funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development. She said this a very nice tie, as Main Street Partnership is under the EDC here in Simsbury, and they are under DECD there. Ms. Nielsen said that the Governor stopped by along with the DECD Commissioner.

Ms. Nielsen said that Main Street Partnership just finished, and are executing, a \$90,000 grant for Eno Memorial Hall. She went before the Board of Selectmen and the Public Building Commission to talk about the real need to keep the Senior Center at Eno. It is an economic driver where it is currently located. There is room to expand. A critical piece is the parking situation with Fiddler's Green. Main Street Partnership has written a \$50,000 Vibrant Community Grant that would start to attack the parking issues in that part of Town. She anticipates hearing whether

they will receive it in the next couple of weeks. She said that location is where they have the most density, and they feel if they can address those issues, including shared parking agreements, then they can apply that throughout downtown. Ms. Nielsen said that they are also look at funding for parking structures. There is some federal and also some state money.

Ms. Nielsen said that they are also working on the East Coast Greenway piece. She said that April 29th through May 1st the East Coast Greenway will be holding their first trails meeting in a small community, which they describe as 50,000 or under. They will start with a ride from New Haven to Simsbury where they will convene at the Simsbury Historical Society at 5:30 p.m. She said that both Senator Blumenthal and Congressman Murhpy will open up the meeting, along with First Selectman Glassman. There also will be representatives from the East Coast Greenway speaking. Governor Malloy will address the crowd at Enos on Saturday. Ms. Nielsen said that the bike path is a proven economic development driver.

Chairman Deming questioned parking behind Enos. Ms. Nielsen explained that they have been in touch with Landscape Architects. One possibility is that two street level decks (no ramps) could be built. This would bring in about 100 parking spaces.

Nancy Anstey, Farmington Valley Visitors Association, gave a report. She said that the end of April is a very busy month for them. April 26th is their kick off to the Barn Tour, which is April 30th. She said that because it is so busy that week, the kick off will be housed in Canton at the Canton Community Center with Todd Levine from the Connecticut Historic Preservation speaking starting at 7:00 p.m..

Ms. Anstey said that Regional Tourism is meeting with Lobbyists and possibly a legislator or two at the Wadsworth Museum at 5:00 p.m. on April 26th. She said that she will not be able to attend the Barn Tour lecture as she needs to find out what is going on, and if Regional Tourism will exist after July 1st or not. Even with the \$15,000,000 that Governor Malloy is supposed to have set aside for Tourism, they still do not know where it puts them or any other region in the state.

Ms. Anstey said that they are participating in the Volunteer Night that same week, and also May 1st is the trail cleanup day. They are working with the Trails Council for that event.

Ms. Anstey said that she and Ms. Banco, along with the core group of the Film Commission, are beginning to work on their July 22nd second annual

film festival and mixer. At this time they are talking about entertainment and an emcee. There should soon be some publicity about film submissions shortly.

Ms. Anstey explained to the new members that they are a private organization and their mission is to promote the Farmington Valley to residents, and to service information centers. They are also very involved in relocation, and they try to entice visitors to come to the area. She said that they represent the communities of Avon, Canton, Simsbury, Farmington, Granby, East Granby, Burlington and New Hartford. She said that they are a dues driven membership organization so their funds are derived from town support, and from individual members for ads to help print the annual guide that they put out. They also do some fundraising.

6. DISCUSSION: TOWN CENTER CODE ADOPTION

Chairman Deming said that as Mr. Peck has not arrived, they will continue onto the next item.

This item was discussed after Item 7.

Mr. Peck said that the Town Center Code was adopted by the Zoning Commission on April 4, 2011. The Town Center Code becomes effective on April 15, 2011. Code Studio is giving us the final minor tweaks in the wording that the Zoning Commission had asked for. This should be posted online on Monday. The official maps are in the office. There is a lot of very good response and press from all over New England and the Country. People have called asking how we had done it.

7. WPCA POLICY AND LANDWORKS, LLC PAD APPLICATION: RON JANECZKO, PRINCIPAL

Ron Janeczko, Landworks Development, gave a brief review of his application. For the new members, he gave a brief summary of Landworks Development. He said that he has been developing projects in the Valley for about 20 years. He said that in Simsbury, at the north end of town, they took over the failed Brettonwood project and turned

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it into Summerfield. Mr. Janeczko said that their big project in Farmington now is Bradford Walk and Somersby. One is a 158 unit condominium/town home

development, and the other is a 52 lot subdivision of one acre lots.

Mr. Janeczko said that he is under contract to purchase a variety of parcels from Ensign-Bickford Realty at the old Hop Brook / Powder Forest area. This includes the Mill Building, the upper parking lot, Parcel 19, which is on the right hand side of Grist Mill Road when you enter, and Parcel 24, which is located after the lawn with the birch trees in it. He said that they have been working the conceptual plans for over a year to create a mixed use development of a higher density that you would normally have in town. The Town created the PAD Zone, after years of debate, and so they are the first application under the PAD Zone.

Mr. Janeczko said that the PAD did a great job of providing the town's boards and commissions with a lot of flexibility. There are really no set backs or coverage figures. It is kind of like a form based code. He said that they want it to look and feel right. Mr. Janeczko said that they took some under-utilized property over and created a mixture of restaurant space, office space, and residential use. The residential use that they proposed is of two flavors. One is a relatively high density apartment product, which is a 14 unit building with 14 garages and an elevator core. All three floors will be handicapped accessible. He said that there is also a town home product, which is on the upper parking lot that will overlook the pond, waterfall and the brook. This was all approved through the Planning, and Zoning Commissions. The Design Review Board gave it their unanimous endorsement. They also received final Wetlands approvals last month, and the final site plan 1 ½ weeks ago.

Mr. Janeczko said that when he first started the application process, through working with Gus Jasinski at Ensign-Bickford Realty, they were a little confused as to how to approach the WPCA question because multi-family high density residential does not exist in this town in the zoning regulations. The sewer charges were changed in 2004-2005, there was not any anticipation of something like a PAD zone. He said that the usage with a studio or one bedroom apartment is much less than a brand new four bedroom home in a subdivision. They made a request to WPCA with their initial application saying that they have three physical connections here. One comes out of Parcel 19, one coming off of Parcel 24, and one coming out of the town homes. The cost was \$4,095.00 per each residential unit in the complex. That creates a barrier as this makes it almost \$450,000.00 to the project.

Mr. Janeczko said that tonight they will be talking with the WPCA to make a formal request for some other way to look at the fee structure, because obviously when this fee was set, there was no one bedroom studio type zone that could be requested. He said that this is not just a Hop Brook issue, this is more of a town wide issue because when he was observing the

Charrettes and heard about some 300 to 400 units of housing in the Town Center area and mixed use developments with the possibility of business on the first floor with apartments up above, he knew that other Developers are going to have the same problem that he has on the sewer charges cost. This is supposed to be housing for the work force with a more affordable housing type in a rental environmental. The cost of almost \$4,100.00 per unit just does not work. He said that for his project the underlying zone is an I-2 zone. Under the I-2 zone, if you did a maximum build-out of offices in there, it would equate to about an \$89,000.00 sewer fee. That is quite different from a \$450,000.00 sewer fee. Mr. Janeczko distributed a summary sheet that he prepared for the WPCA. It summarizes the whole concept.

Chairman Deming introduced Phil Richardson, Chairman of the WPCA, and also Jim Clifton, Superintendent, of the sewer plant. Chairman Deming said that one of the issues is that the underlying zone allows a full build-out and a basic cost of around \$89,000.00. If Mr. Janeczko does the build-out with the density that he has the cost is \$450,000.00. Mr. Janeczko said that the underlying zone is what he looked at to determine if they have enough allocation. Industrial zones have very high allocations. On their property they have over 40,000 gallons a day of allocation. If they had been doing some sort of production plant, they would have plenty of sewer allocation. Mr. Janeczko said that when you look at his proposed use, they are going to only be using about 30,000 gallons a day so they have a 25% surplus in their allocation. They looked at the underlying zone for the allocation and that is why he is looking at the underlying zone for the cost. He said that he also has engineers helping him prepare for his presentation tonight at the WPCA.

Mr. Janeczko said that he is not asking the Economic Development Commission to support a particular position, he is here because as this is an Economic Development Commission they are looking at spurring economic growth and tax base and providing things like lower costs of multi-family housing for the work force that is in the Town. He has heard from The Hartford that they need things like this in town for their employees. It has been an awful long time since Simsbury has created this type of housing and it is needed. Mr. Janeczko said that he is looking for some kind of encouragement or statement of support that the WPCA consider this as an economic development issue. If this is a barrier at least have an open mind and look at the data and see if they can come up with an alternative.

Phil Richardson, WPCA Chairman, said that he has met with Mr. Janeczko before and he has great respect for the research that he has done. At the WPCA they are also sensitive to the economy. They support the growth of the town and economic development, and he understands the calculations and the numbers that Ron has worked out from the underlying property. Mr. Richardson said that Farmington is \$1,000, and their WPCA is supported by the tax base. Who knows what the real cost is. Simsbury's WPCA has no interaction with the tax base. They are self supported by users, connection fees, etc. There is no connection with the Board of Finance other than the fact that they look at their books. Mr. Richardson said that many years ago the connection fee was \$350.00, which was based on the old plant which had been built in 1972. Mr. Richardson said that several years ago they built a \$25,000,000 expansion. He said that if they had not built the plant, there would have been a sewer moratorium in Town as they were at their capacity at the old plant. Mr. Richardson said that they did some calculations knowing that they now have a \$25,000,000 loan. In the interest of full disclosure, Avon is an equity owner of the plant at around 24%, and Granby has 8% or 9%. He said that they looked at the cost of the upgrade of the existing plant, and felt that it was appropriate to be borne by basically the existing users through user fees and maintenance. Then they looked at a portion of the plant that could be reasonably attributed to the expansion, which was about \$11,000,000. This portion of the plant is expansion and it is really not fair to make the existing users bear the burden of the expansion. He said that they needed to raise the cost to cover the cost of the loan for the expansion so they had to make some assumptions. A number 134 was used as equivalent dwelling units per year for twenty years (the term of the loan). The amount is \$4,095.00. Mr. Richardson compared this number to surrounding semi-like towns. They looked at Farmington, Granby, Canton and Avon saying that the Simsbury amount is right in there with the surrounding towns. He said that actually they are building only about 30 to 35 a year instead of their basis of 134. Mr. Richardson said that while it is useful to look at underlying zones and capacities from a particular parcel at the end of the day the WPCA has to pay an \$11,000,000 loan. They are really struggling with how to justify making anything other than what they have established. He said that also if they did not have the plant expansion, developers would be looking at costs higher than the \$4,095.00.

The Commissioner's briefly discussed this issue with Mr. Richardson and Mr. Janeczko. This item will also be discussed further at tonight's WPCA meeting.

Mr. Peck said that he had talked at length with Richard Sawitzke about this. He told Mr. Sawitzke that what we need to do is look at a whole series of options that are available to all of us, including the WPCA. Mr. Sawitzke has agreed, but the information has not been put together yet. What the WPCA is going to need is an analysis of different ways to do this.

One of the things, for example, that has been briefly discussed is the Town's infrastructure rebate program. This rebate program was in place awhile ago, but currently is not funded. Mr. Peck said that this is a suggestion that could properly come from this Commission to the Board of Selectmen and ultimately to the Board of Finance. The funding of that mechanism could possibly have some impact on this process. Mr. Peck said also a really good analysis needs to be done given all the information that is known and available in terms of alternate cross structures for different classes of development. The PAD and Town Center are two classes that are new. How would those interface with existing users so as to not significantly adversely impact any of the current users, but how to actually encourage development going forward. He said that the development climate in town now is different than what it was a few years ago. Mr. Peck said that in his opinion, as a planner, they really will not see all that development that has been approved come on line for a long time. We need to re-look at those projects based upon current economics. He said that they have discussed talking to some commercial brokers along with some residential brokers. Also, talking about current absorption rates and sort of re-study that whole thing. Mr. Peck said that they will need a few weeks to get this together. He said that the WPCA probably will tonight hear Mr. Janeczko's information, and postpone making a decision until we can put all the information together. We need to take Mr. Janeczko's information along with the information that we have in-house, and from a town's point of view, come up with a series of small fixes that will get us to where we need to be. Mr. Peck said that a letter from EDC with a suggestion that we look at these items as quickly as possible, and make it a priority, would be a great help to him to get his staff on this.

Chairman Deming asked if WPCA would need outside funds to be able to bring in somebody to help in that analysis, or is that something that can be done in-house. Mr. Peck said that we can do most of it in-house. He does not know if there is any kind of funding to bring someone in. We need to put the right assumptions in the front end of this process, we should come out okay. Mr. Peck said that he thinks we can create a win-win situation. He said that his vision is to do a report and create a matrix. Mr. Peck said that Mr. Sawitzke has said that he is waiting for information, but on the other hand, we cannot sit there and wait, we need to generate our own information so this can be put together. It is a joint effort.

Chairman Deming said that their policy would be to encourage the WPCA, along with the town, to look at other alternatives that would be conducive to develop on the one hand, but at the same time make sure it can cover their costs.

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8. NEW BUSINESS: SHOWCASE SIMSBURY: EVENT AND PRINT MEDIA

Chairman Deming said that he met with the Chamber of Commerce, along with Simsbury Main Street Partnership. He said that in September there will be an event called Showcase Simsbury. Developers, landowners, and commercial brokers will be invited to this event and Mr. Peck will make a presentation on the PAD and Town Center Code. Also, there may be a possibility of a tour of downtown and also a Q & A session after. The date for this event is Friday, September 23rd, and will be held at the Mason's Hall. There will be a continental breakfast. The next planning session for this event will be at the Chamber of Commerce on April 26th. They will be looking at a list of invitees, and the structure of the program.

Chairman Deming said that Derek Peterson, who works in the real estate industry, has come back to him with several publications where they can perhaps highlight the new zoning regulations that were passed.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 a.m. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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Mark Deming, Chairman