

From: Lois Laczko June 29, 2011 9:16:50 AM
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To: SimsburyCT_EconMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MAY 12, 2011 – MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mark Deming, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the 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, Gary Dornbush, Timothy Ellsworth, Todd Burrick, and Derek Peterson. Also in attendance was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, and other interested parties.

2. APPROVAL of MINUTES of April 14, 2011

Commissioner George moved to approve the minutes of April 14, 2011 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson and passed unanimously.

3. REPORTS: SMSP, FVVA

As Ms. Nielsen and Ms. Anstey were not able to attend this meeting, Chairman Deming read their reports.

Simsbury Main Street Partnership Report:

East Coast Greenway. The East Coast Greenway on April 29th and April 30th was a big success for Simsbury. Governor Dannel Malloy, Speaker of the House Chris Donovan, and Mayor John DeStefano were some of the speakers and participants at this event. Main Street handled the press publicity and event co-ordination. Articles appeared in the local newspapers. Rick Green wrote about it in the Hartford Courant.

The Farmers Market. The Farmer's Market will begin on June 2nd and close on October 13th. They are in the process of scheduling special events and partners. This event draws thousands of people to Simsbury for 20 weeks and

also helps local businesses and farms. Last year Flamig, Tulmeadow and Hall Farms participated along with the businesses such as Pastels, Kaness, Simsmore Tennis, etc. Also, Tourism, Theatre Guild, The Dog Park and many other local organizations are on sight. A tour bus from the southern part of Connecticut came. This is the big economic driver for the Town and surrounding businesses at Simsmore Square.

Talcott Mountain Music Festival. The Executive Director of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra Kristen Phillips will be leaving at the end of May. Main Street will once again co-ordinate the food sales on site and restaurant and lodging packages. This event brings tourists and residents to down town.

Bill Selig Jeweler's. Bill Selig Jeweler's, for the third consecutive year, held their Mother's Day event honoring military wife's and mother's with free freshwater pearl necklaces. Main Street helped them get the TV coverage for this event, which made it onto NBC 30 and Fox 61 news. A press release made it to the many newspapers.

Annual Meeting. The Town once again used their campaign for the cover. Chairman Deming said that this is the campaign that Main Street Partnership put together with photos, etc. about describing Simsbury and the Valley.

Farmington Valley Visitor's Association Report:

The Barn Tour was a huge success. Thirty participants enjoyed their trip to Flamig Farm, Tulmeadow, Simsbury Historical Society and Holcomb Farm. They are planning another barn tour in April of 2012 concentrating on farms and barns in Granby and East Granby.

Monday, May 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the Iron Horse Frog is their next Film Commission meeting. Michael, the Writer and Director of "A Simple Wedding" will be there to discuss the status of his film. They are also looking for film submissions for their second annual film, fete, and mixer to be held on July 22nd.

4. STATUS of the WPCA ALTERNATIVE POLICY INITIATIVES

Hiram Peck said that he and Richard Sawitzke are working on putting together a report that he hopes will represent a

compromise situation with regard to the WPCA's current charge versus the past charge. He said that there are a number of issues that they are trying to address. One is the fact that the charges for the WPCA users are based upon a 1985 zoning map, and they are trying to bring this up to date with current zoning to adjust those charges. Mr. Peck said that he feels strongly that they can come to some sort of compromise that will still allow the WPCA to continue meeting their obligations with regard to financing the debt that they have, but also encouraging, rather than discouraging, reasonable amount of development in town.

Mr. Peck said that Landworks, an applicant in town, has asked the WPCA to have a public hearing on this matter. He does not know if this request has been granted. WPCA is meeting this evening, but he is not sure if this is a public hearing or just discussion on this issue. He said that there has been a lot of discussion about the fact that WPCA is concerned that if they were to change their policy, that it would have an impact on existing sewer users. Mr. Peck said that he is focusing on the fact that they are now looking at two new classes of users, as opposed to just simply extending a tax break to somebody. He is hopeful that the two new classes will fit into the pricing program, and hopeful that they can come up with some sort of a compromise in the very near future.

Chairman Deming asked if those would be applicable only to Town Center Zone and PDA's. Mr. Peck said that is the way he is looking at it because to do other than that would upset the whole structure. He understands why the WPCA does not want to do that, but he also understands why they do not want to have people say that they have already bought into the system, why should they pay additional money to encourage development. This is a very delicate balance. His sense is that they are only going to address the two new users. Mr. Peck said that the developers are not looking for a free ride, just simply looking for some way to allow the development to proceed forward while paying a reasonable amount into the system.

A Commissioner asked if they were talking about just the physical connection, or some sort of increase in the operating costs. If there is no real incremental increase in operating costs, then he does not see why the developer would not foot the bill for the physical connection. Mr. Peck said that we have to figure out a way that we can cover those costs without adversely affecting the people that are already in the system. He is hoping to have the report finished in the next week or so.

A Commissioner asked about a previous discussion of a letter. Chairman Deming said that they were going to send a letter to the WPCA, but because Hiram and Rich are in the process of working on coming up with an alternative plan, he thought it best to wait to see what they come up with. EDC would then discuss the matter, and if in agreement, produce a letter to

the WPCA.

Commissioner Dornbush said that they do not want to discourage development, which this will do. There is a tremendous burden on residential homeowners here in terms of taxes. This lack of forecasting where the mill rate will be in five to ten years is detrimental to understanding what is going to happen. If people see that the mill rate is going to go through the ceiling, the only offset is to further expand sensible development in Town. Otherwise, you are going to increase the burden on the people. The higher your taxes go, the lower the value your home goes. A Commissioner said that in order to meet the objective just explained we need to be competing with our own State for the interest of developers. It does not help Simsbury if we have albatrosses that hang around the neck of developers and scares them away.

Chairman Deming said that you have to look at the process. This process begins with the applicant presenting at first an informal application to the Town where they get feedback from the boards/commissions. There has been some success with the Planning and Zoning Commissions to get them to be more flexible and give more feedback before the applicant comes in with the formal application. Chairman Deming said that he thinks WPCA is another one of those pieces that we can do something with to make it become a smooth part of the process.

5. SHOWCASE SIMSBURY: UPDATE

Chairman Deming said that he, along with the Chamber of Commerce and Simsbury Main Street Partnership, has had two meetings regarding Showcase Simsbury. They have scheduled Friday, September 23, 2011 for this event and will invite some land owners, town officials, commissioners, developers, builders, bankers, and other people who are involved in the development mix to come to Town. There will be a "meet and greet" period, and he will ask Hiram to make a presentation on the PAD and the Town Center Regulations. There will also be an opportunity for people to tour the town center. They will put together some tour packages so people can walk around self-guided, or possibly some transportation will be available to take them around. They are now working on the invitee list. Chairman Deming said that if anyone at this meeting knows someone that might be interested in attending, let Sarah

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know. The invitee list should go out sometime in June so people can put the

event on their calendars. He also hopes to do an email blast to “save the date”. The time of the event will be from 9:00 a.m. to noon and will be held at the new Free Mason’s building. There also will be a continental breakfast.

The Commissioners discussed how they need to reach, besides the local people, realtors, mortgage brokers, developers, etc. from outside the area. Mr. Jansen suggested the Hartford Business Journal as a source for the top twenty commercial realtors in the Hartford area. A Commissioner suggested notifying some Associations.

6. OLD BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Peck said that the new Dunkin Donut’s being constructed in the south end would like to be open by June 1st. On the same property, just south of the Dunkin Donuts, a small retail building is being constructed. This property is owned by Tom Evans. He also owns property located just south of the Avon Barber Shop and property across the street from Dunkin Donut’s (former Patio Barn). Mr. Evans is trying to do things that the Town likes, and has shown up at the Route 10 Corridor Study meetings.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mark Deming, Chairman