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Cc:

ADOPTED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
July 9, 2009
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 Kevin Crimmins, Derek Petersen, Alan Needham, Lou George and Chuck Minor were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 11, 2009

Several edits were made to the June 11, 2009 minutes.

Commissioner Crimmins made a motion to approve the June 11, 2009 minutes as amended. Commissioner Minor seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Status of: PAD Regulation, Charrette

Regarding the PAD regulation, Mr. Peck stated that the Subcommittee will be meeting again tonight. He stated that the general consensus is to move forward to get the regulation back to the Zoning Commission. There will be a public meeting scheduled in about one week at which public comments will be heard and incorporated into the revised draft if needed. A public hearing could be held as soon as the end of August.

Commissioner George stated his concerns regarding how the terminology is developing regarding transfer of development rights. He feels that this regulation is a good opportunity to receive benefits from developers for other parts of Town. Mr. Peck stated that he is hopeful that this regulation will stay flexible to accommodate different things.

Commissioner Peterson stated that there are different opinions on the

Subcommittee as to whether or not more details should be put into the regulation. He stated that it was very helpful when the Town Attorney explained why certain things were put in the regulation.

Regarding the Charrette, Mr. Peck stated that there will be a public meeting on August 10th to explain the process. The consultants will also be meeting with the stakeholders on August 11th.

The Charrette process will begin on September 11th. The venue for the Charrette will be at the Simsbury Public Library in the Program Room. Mr. Peck stated that SCTV will be recording the meetings. It is possible that they will also webcast these meetings.

Chairman Deming questioned if additional support would be needed for the consultant team. Mr. Peck stated that he will be looking for volunteers; some people have already offered to help.

Regarding the Tax Abatement Program, Mr. Peck stated that this is still ongoing. The Selectmen have asked him to put together a memo regarding recommendations that should be tweaked in the current program. He stated that his recommendations will involve: the timing of the program regarding the budget process; and discriminating between good applications that are worth proceeding with and those that probably would not go forward. He stated that he will also be putting a list together of people who have participated in this program in the past and ask them how important this program was to them.

Mr. Peck stated that he would also like to consider waiving or reducing permit fees. Commissioner George stated that this would be a distinguishing feature for businesses to come to Simsbury. He feels that good programs need to be in place like these for businesses to want to come to Town.

4. Regional Economic Development Concept

Chairman Deming stated that at the last meeting, Mr. Peck distributed examples of economic development plans for the Commission members to review. He stated that these Plans were drawn on language from the 1960's. Towns can put a regional economic development plan together in order to get Federal grant money. Chairman Deming stated that the reason for this Commission to put a Plan together would be so they can go after grant money. They need to decide what they would like to go after and for what reason.

Commissioner Peterson questioned if the money would be for individual Towns or if it would go to a regional cause. Chairman Deming stated that the

money would be for a regional cause. Commissioner Crimmins felt that it would be good to be able to have access to this Federal funding. He suggested asking Mr. Peck for recommendations on how to use the money.

Chairman Deming stated that a process is needed to identify Simsbury with other Towns. Then the other Towns could joint Simsbury regarding the regional plan. They could then apply for grants together. Commissioner Peterson stated that other Town's may not benefit from everything that Simsbury might benefit from. They would need to decide which Towns to work together with.

Commissioner Crimmins stated that he feels Simsbury should be involved regionally. This is one approach and one benefit. Also, these Federal funds are not available on a per Town basis. He feels that more information is still needed before decisions can be made.

Commissioner Peterson stated that they first need to decide on the Towns that would make up the region. They also need to see what each Town can offer. There needs to be a regional benefit. They will also need to think about what Simsbury has to offer. Commissioner Crimmins stated that the primary objective needs to be identified. They can then decide which Towns should participate.

Chairman Deming questioned what other Towns Simsbury might join with and what the Federal funding might be used for. Mr. Peck stated that although he does not have any specifics moving forward, the Town cannot apply for these funds without this mechanism in place. He stated that they need to look at not only the land use aspects, but at the economic aspects also. He suggested that the Farmington Valley Collaborative would be a good place to start. Mr. Peck stated that this is a counterpart to the POCD; it is the economic component to the regional plan.

Chairman Deming questioned if a consultant would need to be hired. Mr. Peck stated that they would first need to go to Mary Glassman to see if she feels that they should start with the Farmington Valley Collaborative. They can then see if there is a way to put this together to get a structure in place.

Commissioner Crimmins stated that pursuing this with the Farmington Valley Collaborative is reasonable. He questioned if the Town had considered expanding the idea of the regional economic program to CRCOG or all of the Municipalities within this part of the State. Mr. Peck stated that from a theoretical standpoint, that would make perfect sense, although from a realistic standpoint, they need to start small.

5. New Business/Old Business

Mr. Jansen, Planning Commission, stated that at the last Planning Commission meeting, they discussed Town economics. They discussed creating bike paths so that the children can walk or ride their bikes to school. This will help improve health, while saving money. He stated that several people will be meeting with Mary Glassman to discuss this issue. Mr. Jansen stated that the Planning Commission has also been discussing having subdivisions allocate money for sidewalks, etc, elsewhere in Town if they are not needed in that particular subdivision. This will help connect the Town. Commissioner George stated that he agrees with this idea, although he is pessimistic.

Commissioner Peterson questioned if the bike trails would be paved or gravel. Mr. Jansen stated that he believes they should be 6'-10' paved paths. He stated that this concept is already stated in the POCD.

Commissioner George stated that this is what the EDC has been discussing also, transfer of public development rights. This is a great way for the Town to get things funded.

Commissioner George questioned how the concerts in Town have been going. He questioned if there were any issue with parking. Mr. Peck stated that the parking has been working well. The Town has set up alternate parking lots; he has not heard of any complaints.

Chairman Deming stated that he met with the owner regarding Fiddler's Green merchants and how the parking is affecting them. He stated that the timing of certain events helps these businesses. Chairman Deming stated that Sarah Nielson of Main Street Partnership will be getting feedback from other local merchants as well so that the EDC can go back to the Board of Selectmen to see if these events can be planned with the local merchants in mind.

Chairman Deming stated that there is a regular meeting scheduled for August. He questioned if they should keep this meeting on the calendar. Commissioner George stated that between now and the September 10th meeting, the EDC should get together at least once to discuss their position regarding the Charrette. He feels that they should meet as many times as necessary. Although the Commission members may not agree on everything, they should come up with a consensus. The Charrette is directly impacting the most important economic cornerstone of the Town. He feels that this Commission needs to be a part of this. Some of the important issues would include parking and the boundaries of the Town Center.

Commissioner Crimmins suggested that each Commission member make a list for the consultant's consideration; this could be discussed at the next

meeting. He recommended scheduling one special meeting prior to the August meeting and one special meeting prior to the September meeting.

The Commission decided that special meetings should be held on July 30th and August 27th. Chairman Deming stated that he would send out an e-mail to get feedback from the Commission members who were not in attendance today.

Commissioner Crimmins stated that this Commission has discussed a strategic economic development plan. He feels that if they are going to present a list of important issues to the consultant, it would be more powerful if it was tied to some kind of objectives that are important. Commissioner George stated that they could use the POCD.

Commissioner George stated that he would like to invite Main Street Partnership and the Chamber to these special meetings in order to get their input.

6. Status of Airport Study

Commissioner George stated that he spoke with the attorney for the property owners. They made their position known that the owner did not want to move forward because of the price that was stated in the initial draft was too low. Commissioner George stated that he reassured them that this number would probably change and they should not use this number as a decision maker.

Commissioner George stated that he is waiting to hear back from the property owners to determine if they are interested in continuing the process to come to a more solid number.

7. Adjournment

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