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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
September 10, 2009
REGULAR MEETING

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 Levesque, Alan Needham, and Chuck Minor were present.

Commissioner Levesque made a motion to approve the August 13, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Needham seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Ms. Nielson distributed the Discover Simsbury section to the Commission members. She stated that Main Street Partnership picked different stores from Town, and other features, including branding and the Home Show to be included in this section.

Ms. Nielson stated that Main Street Partnership held Taste of Simsbury at the Simsbury Inn. This event showcased Simsbury restaurants. It drew in many people from throughout the State. This event was sold out; 300 people were in attendance. She stated that the food was outstanding.

Ms. Nielson stated that Main Street Partnership has distributed their membership mailing, which included a list of events for the summer. She would love to have the Economic Development Commission members as new members. She stated that, this year, they currently have 40 new members that are mostly seniors.

Ms. Nielson stated that Main Street Partnership is working with the Town regarding the Charrette. They also helped with picking the stakeholder groups. They will continue to help by bringing business owners to meetings throughout the Charrette process.

Main Street Partnership is doing something new this year. Ms. Nielson stated that they have nominated Simsbury for Dozen Distinction Destinations. She stated that they have a video on SCTV that showcases Simsbury.

The Talcott Mountain Music Festival and the REACH Festival were great events. Ms. Nielson stated that REACH was more work than anticipated. TMMF was great as always. She stated that they will be doing the TMMF again next year.

Ms. Nielson stated that the Getty Station will be opening soon under new ownership. She stated that Chip Houlihan will be moving to the northern gateway to Hopbrook Tavern. He will be their first tenant. Say Cheese and October Farms will be moving into Awakening Natural Healing, which is in Simsmore Square. Simsmore Tennis is also expanding.

Chairman Deming asked how retailers have been doing during these economic times. Ms. Nielson stated that times are difficult, although things are improving; sales are picking up. She stated that some specialty retailers are struggling more.

Commissioner Peterson questioned what was happening with the Wagner property. Ms. Nielson stated that Mr. Wagner is very community minded. He is looking for the right fit for Simsbury; there are a lot of possibilities for his property.

4. Discussion of EDC recommendations for Code Studio meeting on Friday, September 11th

Mr. Peck distributed the memo regarding the summary of the EDC information for the Charrette. Commissioner Minor stated that his suggestion of moving residential and walkability to the top of their priority list have already been revised within this memo.

Chairman Deming stated that the EDC is scheduled to meet with Code Studio tomorrow, September 10th at 4:30 p.m. at the Simsbury Public Library. He asked each Commission member to review this memo and asked each member to take several items that they could discuss with the consultant.

There were several minor grammatical changes in the first two paragraphs of the memo. There was a great deal of discussion regarding the third paragraph. The first sentence reads, "The EDC also strongly encourages

land use regulations that are reflective of the best interests of the Town and all of the diverse interests contained within the Town – not just the most vocal or just the negative elements or just the groups that oppose specific projects”. Commissioner Minor suggested that the phrase, “most vocal” was not needed. Commissioner Crimmins stated that the consultant needs to be aware that groups have different volumes. This Commission needs to encourage the consultant to listen to even the soft spoken voices. Commissioner Needham stated that the consultant should be listening to all sides.

Mr. Jansen, Planning Commission, stated that this sentence is very important; it says a lot. Several Commission members had suggestions on how to reword this sentence. The Commission agreed to omit, “...just the negative elements or just the...” and insert, “those”. Mr. Jansen also stated that the word, “economic” should be inserted into the first sentence to read, “...the best economic interests...”. The Commission agreed.

Commissioner Needham stated that he feels this sentence is against form base zoning. He stated that form base zoning is detailed; he would like a middle ground. He would like enough detail to attract developers. Mr. Peck stated that this will allow the Commissions the flexibility they need to make an appropriate decision based upon the situation.

The following are changes that the Commission members made to the memo:

1. Omit, “Add”, and insert, “Allow greater...”.
2. Insert, “economic”. The sentence would read, “Zoning Regulations should promote walkability, connectivity and economic sustainability...”
3. No changes.
4. No changes.
5. No changes.
6. Omit, “Determine if it is possible to...”.
7. Omit, “...including determining if one way vs. two streets are more optimal”.
8. The sentence would read, “Using infill development where appropriate to optimize commercial, and residential and mixed uses in the Town Center area”. The wording, “Facilitate leisure shopping in Town Center area.” would be its own separate number.
9. No changes.
10. No changes.
11. Omit, “Propose” and insert, “Devise”.
12. No changes.
13. No changes.

Mr. Peck asked that the Commission explain Number 13 regarding considering establishment of additional open public spaces for public uses. Chairman

Deming stated that they are talking about a common green/center. They would like to see an area that is for multi-uses. He stated that there is a difference between open space and a common green.

14. No changes.

15. Omit this number altogether. The Board agreed that this is out of the consultant's scope.

16-17. The Board agreed to combine these numbers. This would read, "Consider the proper role for integration of areas that abut the Town Center, such as the Dyno Nobel/Ensign Bickford complex and West Street.

18. Omit this number altogether. The Board agreed that this is out of the consultant's purview.

The Commission members agreed that they felt comfortable reviewing this memo with the consultant; there was no need for them to divide up the document in order for certain members to discuss certain items with the consultant. Mr. Peck stated that if time allowed, he would e-mail these revisions to the Commission members prior to their meeting with the consultant.

Mr. Peck stated that there will be a meeting on Saturday morning at the Simsbury Public Library. If the Program Room is filled to capacity, people will be moved to other rooms in the Library to watch the meeting on a screen. Everyone is welcome to attend the break-out sessions. There will be 15 different tables during the break-out session at all different locations in the Library.

5. New Business/Old Business

There was none.

6. Adjournment

Commissioner Minor made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 a.m. Commissioner Peterson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.