

From: Lois Laczko December 14, 2009 9:15:20 AM
Subject: Economic Development Commission Minutes 11/12/2009 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_EconMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
November 12, 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 Levesque, Alan Needham, and Nancy Haase were present.

2. Approval of Minutes of October 8, 2009

Commissioner Peterson made a motion to approve the October 8, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Levesque seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of 2010 Regular Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Needham stated that dates need to be picked for the September and November meetings because of conflicts. Chairman Deming stated that these dates do not need to be decided upon now. They can be scheduled at a later date.

Commissioner Levesque made a motion to approve the 2010 Regular Meeting schedule as presented. Commissioner Peterson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4. Announcements: Proposed joint meeting with EDC/SMSP for January 14, 2010

Chairman Deming stated that he met with Sarah Neilson of the Main Street Partnership. She would like to have a joint meeting with the EDC in January to discuss the previous year and the year ahead. This meeting would take place during the EDC's regularly scheduled meeting. The

Commission members agreed to have this meeting.

Commissioner Haase stated her concern that all of the administrative issues, including their budget, still be dealt with during this regular meeting.

5. Reports

SMPAC, Dave Ryan

There was no report.

SMSP, Melissa Brett

Melissa Brett, Vice President of Main Street Partnership, stated that the School Fundraiser Program is moving forward. Latimer Lane School has a "Meet and Greet" every month; September, October and November have been committed to local restaurants. She stated that keeping fundraisers in Town and exposure to new businesses has been very successful.

Ms. Brett stated that Main Street Partnership is currently applying for a Historic Restoration Grant for \$200,000; there are no matching funds required. If received, the grant will come from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. As a non-profit organization, they can receive this grant on behalf of the Town. She stated that they should hear by December if they will receive this grant.

Ms. Brett stated that they are also working on Dozen Distinctive Destinations. She stated that they applied for Simsbury to be on this list. She stated that this was a lengthy and in-depth application. Only one or two New England Towns have this distinction. This video will be used to promote Simsbury in many ways. She stated that they are hopeful that they can get this video mass produced to send out.

Regarding the January 14th joint meeting, Ms. Brett stated that Main Street will highlight the previous and upcoming year. She stated that if there is any information that the Commission members would like in advance so they can review it at their December meeting, she would be happy to get that information distributed. She stated that Main Street has done many great things this year.

Ms. Brett stated that Connecticut Main Street is doing a course of Downtown Revitalization Institute of the Return of Investment and Historic Preservation, which will be held on December 11th. The topic discussed will be regarding how restoring and having historic situations downtown can bring money back into the downtown.

Chairman Deming asked Ms. Brett, as a downtown business owner, how downtown events and parking affects her business. Ms. Brett stated that her business is retail; Saturdays are a huge business day for them. She stated that they are located on a one-way street; parking is limited. When there are big events at Eno Memorial Hall on a weekday, this affects her business as well as parking.

Chairman Deming questioned what weekday events affect her business. Ms. Brett stated that the well attended Senior Center events affect her business, as well as the Arts and Crafts Fair, although they are very respectful regarding parking. She stated that during events, they constantly have to patrol their back parking and the limited parking on the street. Ms. Brett stated that the other big events that affect her business are Simsbury Celebrates and the St. Mary's Carnival; the trash/litter is the biggest issue with these events.

Chairman Deming asked Ms. Brett if she had any recommendations regarding how her parking could be better protected. Ms. Brett stated that they have to constantly ask for "Patron Only Parking" signage for each event. She feels that they are often forgotten.

FVVA, Nancy Antsy

Ms. Antsy stated that their Haunted Miniature Golf fundraising event was very successful despite most of the Saturdays being rained out. She stated that their "Warm Up to Winter" discount coupon get-a-way program begins December 1st. They currently have 2,500 requests for this brochure.

Regarding the Film Commission website, Ms. Antsy invited the Economic Development Commission members to a meeting on December 7th. At this meeting, they will discuss the website, which will be launched in January.

Ms. Antsy distributed the 2010 Visitor's Guide to the Commission members.

Regarding a State tourism update, Ms. Antsy stated that the Governor and Legislature cut the budgets of all of the Regional Districts an additional 5%.

6. Conceptual Master Plans: Wolcott Road area and Simsbury Meadows

Chairman Deming stated that there was money taken from the Economic Development Commission budget in order to do the mapping for the Simsbury Meadows area. This included taking all of the previous reports and studies done for the last 15-20 years and including that into this mapping. Now that the mapping is complete and the Charrette is done, Chairman Deming

stated that they are moving in the direction that there may be new Zoning Regulations for the Town Center within the next six months. He stated that from an economic point of view, if development takes place downtown, based on the new regulations, it would be important for anyone looking at development that they have a good idea of what will be happening across the street. He stated that Simsbury Meadows will be mostly recreational. He feels that it would be helpful to the Town and developers if they have an understanding of the entry points for pedestrians at Simsbury Meadow and future vehicular entrances and exits, parking, etc. This can be shown conceptually on a map.

Commissioner Crimmins stated that he does not feel that a developer would be looking for this much detail. He stated that although it would be interesting to know, he does not feel that it would be a big factor.

Chairman Deming stated that he would like to ask Engineering and Planning to look at producing a conceptual master plan with three phases that would dovetail with the Charrette. Phase I would be to identify pedestrian and vehicular entrances and exits and how they integrate with existing road systems and future trail systems; Phase II would identify current future parking areas as well as multipurpose fields, recreation; and Phase III would establish a capital budget schedule for any development that may take place in the future.

Mr. Peck suggested that Culture, Parks and Recreation be included in these discussions. Commissioner Levesque stated that he would broaden the scope to also include the Charrette process and what has been learned from that.

The Commission agreed to send a letter to Planning and Parks and Recreation to, over time, address this issue.

Commissioner Haase stated that the Charrette concentrated on the Town Center, not other areas. Mr. Peck stated that there may be some recommendations that come out of the Charrette that are outside the purview of the Zoning Commission. He should be receiving the Charrette report shortly. Mr. Peck stated that the consultants for the Charrette will be back in Simsbury on November 17th for a public meeting with the Land Use Boards and Commissions. They will discuss the general idea of the concept of what they have for the Town Center regulation.

Regarding the Public Gathering Permit, Mr. Peck stated that this issue stems from the discussions regarding the REACH Concert. He distributed a draft copy of the regulation to the Commission members. He stated they are revising this permit; the process will be more detailed. This revision will help with the timeframe regarding when things need to be

submitted. Information will need to be submitted by an applicant at least 6 weeks prior to an event. This will allow a minimum of four weeks for notification of a public hearing, if necessary. It will also allow time for other Boards and Commissions to review the application.

Mr. Peck stated that comments from the Fire Marshal will be updated as well as the map of the Town Center area. Also, applicants will be asked to sign a declaration as an affidavit that states if the applicant gives the Town false information, they could be liable of a Class A misdemeanor.

Commissioner Haase questioned if annual event holders would have this communicated to them. Mr. Peck stated that everyone will be notified.

Commissioner Levesque questioned if Mr. Peck thought having to submit information in a more timely fashion would be an issue for some applicants. Mr. Peck stated that they will not refuse to process any application, although if information is not submitted, it may not be able to be processed depending if a public hearing needs to be scheduled. Timing may be an issue.

Commissioner Crimmins questioned if this was just for the Town Center. Mr. Peck stated that this would be the process for any public property.

Mr. Peck stated that he continues to discuss things with property owners regarding the Incentive Housing Zone. He believes that there will be 3-4 parcels included that will have a regulation that is drafted by the consultant. He is hopeful that the Zoning Commission and the State, OPM, will both approve this regulation to put these zones in place.

Regarding Wolcott Road and Herman Drive area, Chairman Deming stated that they are zoned industrial, although there are some residential areas. He questioned if it is in the Town's interest to look at this area and create a more flexible zone in which commercial and industrial activity can take place. The POCD strongly suggests that the Town look at some of these areas to give greater flexibility to the uses.

Mr. Peck stated that currently, one of the mechanisms that the Zoning Commission is discussing is the Planned Area Development Regulation. He stated that the Board of Selectmen will also be discussing the Tax Abatement Program again to decide whether to continue the program or to modify it.

7. Build Out Analysis: Increasing tax revenues from commercial/industrial footprints

Chairman Deming stated that there has been a lot of discussion

regarding the mix of residential versus commercial tax bases. Considering what would have to be built out conceptually in commercial/industrial square footage to significantly change that mix, he questioned what it might look like. Not in terms of specific development, but regarding square footage.

Chairman Deming suggested that the EDC picked a year, for example 2008, and look at the numbers and the breakdown of what the taxes are. He stated that they could consider what it would look like, mathematically, instead of collecting 11.5% in commercial, if the Town collected 25%. They could then take that number, based on 2008, and apply to it some mix of commercial/industrial. He stated that there could be different models/scenarios. They could then look at the mill rates, take it out, and then put it in square footage so they have a better understanding of what would be required in square footage of additional things to the Town in order to significantly change the mix of taxation.

Chairman Deming stated that this exercise would give the Planning and Zoning Commissions an idea of what it will take over a certain period of time to change this mix.

Commissioner Haase stated that there has been residential growth, which is a good thing, although at the same time, the commercial/industrial is not where it needs to be. Commissioner Peterson stated that, in terms of the Incentive Housing Zone, the Town is considering more housing at a potential cost to the Town. Mr. Needham stated that this density in the Town Center will provide the opportunity to create more commercial development.

Chairman Deming stated that over the next several months, if the Commission members are interested, they could have a Subcommittee working with the Assessor to look at the ranges of mill rates on various types of property. He asked for volunteers for the Subcommittee. Commissioners Levesque, Needham and Crimmins stated that they would like to be a part of the Subcommittee.

8. New Business/Old Business

Mr. Jansen, Planning Commission, stated that there will be meeting tomorrow at the Iron Frog. Mr. Sawitzke will be discussing the bike path and the Bridge of Flowers will be holding a fundraiser. The cost is \$25 per person.

Regarding the Planned Area Development Regulation, Mr. Jansen stated he feels that the Economic Development Commission should be involved in pushing this regulation through. The Zoning Commission may want to wait

to address this issue when their new members are seated.

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Haase made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 a.m.
Commissioner Levesque seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.