

From: Lois Laczko January 9, 2012 9:02:45 AM
Subject: Economic Development Commission Minutes 12/08/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_EconMin
Cc:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mark Deming, Chairman, called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order on Thursday, December 8th, 2011 at 7:35 a.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Town Offices. The following members were also present: Charles Minor, Louis George, Andrew Markowski, and Timothy Ellsworth. Also in attendance were Ferg Jansen, liaison to the Planning Commission, Nancy Haase, Board of Selectmen, Leslie Faraci, Commission Clerk and other interested parties.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NOVEMBER

Commissioner Ellsworth moved to approve the minutes of November 10, 2011 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and passed unanimously.

III. REPORTS: SMSP & FVVA

FVVA - Nancy Anstey, Executive Director of the Farmington Valley Visitors Association, presented the Commission with an update. Ms. Anstey began by saying the Film Commission will be having it's first "Oscar Party" on Sunday, February 26th at the Farmington Gardens. Ms. Anstey said that the film "Pawn" is being shot in West Hartford and unfortunately, we did not have a vacant diner available for use for the three (3) weeks requested, as they did call her and ask. She did speak with them about lodging as well. Commissioner George asked Ms. Anstey to elaborate on the process by which the film companies reach her. Ms. Anstey said there are only a few Film Commissions in the State that compete with the Farmington Valley Film Commission. Lodging was discussed, as Ms. Anstey said we are not able to accommodate the demand from the production companies for a large amount of very inexpensive lodging. She said there have been opportunities lost due to that fact alone. The State Tax Credit benefits were explained by Commissioner George and then discussed. Ms. Anstey said multiple production companies have told her that the tax credits were not significant enough to incentivize them to come here. Rich Correia mentioned a film currently

under production in Stonington, CT is generating buzz, an increase in traffic and interest in that area. Ms. Anstey said they are looking forward to 2012 and planning to increase fundraising events, as the October storm interrupted some fund raising opportunities.

SMSP - Rich Correia, President, Simsbury Main Street Partnership, addressed the Commission and mentioned that the consultants were in Town moving forward on the Design Guidelines. Mr. Correia then said he was involved in a meeting with the head of the Pinchot Foundation. He said that PBS is making a documentary on Gifford Pinchot, so the representatives from the Pinchot Foundation were here because the World Premier of the documentary will be here in Simsbury in August or September. Mr. Correia reviewed what they did with the representatives while they were in Simsbury. Mr. Correia mentioned the possibility of working with the Film Commission in order to have a contest to commemorate the upcoming anniversaries associated with Gifford Pinchot. Mr. Correia then mentioned his recent attendance of the ICSC Conference in NYC, saying that the trends reflected at the conference were about an increase in urban living and the movement towards the "urbanization" of suburban downtowns. He mentioned the discussion of antiquated parking, with oversized lots that are under-utilized. Commissioner Deming noted that the NEREJ has asked to do an article on Simsbury and its regulations. Mr. Correia told the Commission that he spoke with a developer at ICSC that said Hiram Peck was one of the best Town Planners he had ever worked with, and this particular developer had worked all over the country. The walking-tour along Hopmeadow was discussed. Mr. Correia then wrapped up by saying the prediction from the retail world was that this holiday season would be the strongest since 2007.

IV. BUSINESS FEEDBACK FROM STORM DISRUPTION

Commissioner Deming said that the general feedback was about the disruption in business, but not necessarily what the Town could have done differently. Commissioner Markowski said he had heard frustration with CL&P, but not with the Town. The reimbursement with regards to electricity and cable were discussed.

V. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Deming stated that there was an official ground breaking on Dorsett Crossing. He then said the WPCA hired a consultant to give input on possibly constructing a new policy, specifically with regards to the PAD and Town Center Zone. The timing of the results was discussed. Commissioner Deming said he will be unable to attend the January meeting and brought up the possibility of canceling or rescheduling. It was decided, due to the budgeting process, that the meeting should be rescheduled for the first week of January. The overall budget process was discussed.

Commissioner Ellsworth moved to cancel the January 12, 2012 regular meeting of the EDC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner George and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Markowski moved to schedule a special meeting of the EDC for Thursday, January 5, 2012. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ellsworth and passed unanimously.

The contents of the Agenda for that Special Meeting were discussed.

Commissioner George said he had attended one of the Design Guidelines workshops (Landowners) and reported that there was good discussion. He said it seems that everyone is in favor of doing something to keep the character of the downtown consistent, and varying architecture styles were discussed. Commissioner George did note that the walkability of downtown will always be an issue, which was discussed at the workshop. Mr. Correia mentioned some of the activity at the Wagner property, but said there was confidential information that could not be discussed. He did mention that potential developers are waiting to hear the final outcome on the WPCA issue. Drake Hill was discussed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ellsworth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 a.m. This motion was seconded by Commissioner George and was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Deming, Chairman