



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 5:30pm
Simsbury Public Library, Program Room 2 – 725 Hopmeadow Street

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:30pm. Commission members Bill Freeman, Ron Jodice, Brooke Freeman, Carrie Meckel and Tom Earl were present. Ex officio members Maria Capriola, Town Manager, and Bill Rice, Chair of the Planning Commission, were also present. Staff members in attendance included Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager. Others in attendance included Sarah Nielsen, Executive Director of the Main Street Partnership.

1) EDC Work Plan

a) Update from work streams/teams

- *Business Recruitment, Retention and Outreach* – The group debriefed on the June 12 roundtable event, and discussed plans for the next event. Mr. Crowther will prepare the invitation list for the next roundtable, which will be held on September 18.
- *Business Incentives* – Mr. Earl will present his research at the July meeting.
- *Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing* – Mr. Freeman provided an update on his meeting with the chair and vice chair of the Tourism Committee. Ms. Nielsen shared some thoughts on marketing, and indicated that Main Street has asked for a corporate sponsor for this purpose. Ms. Capriola noted that she was hoping to request a year-end transfer to fund marketing efforts. Mr. Crowther said that there should be a more integrated approach to marketing between the EDC, the Chamber and Main Street. Although there are different web pages for these groups, the resources provided on those pages should be consistent. The group discussed the need for Town staff to conduct an audit of the website in order to fix broken links and refresh outdated materials.
- *Strategic Vision* – Ms. Capriola walked through the building permit fee analysis that was prepared by the Town Manager's Office. She noted that Simsbury's building permit fees are well below the average of those charged by comparable communities. If we had charged the average fee, we would have raised almost \$290,000 more for residential permits than we raised at our current fee over the

last 16 months. The group discussed the need to get the word out on this fact, as it is not commonly known how favorable our fees are.

2) Housekeeping Items

a) 2018/2019 Annual Report and Presentation to the Board of Selectmen

Mr. Crowther said that the EDC will make a presentation to the Board of Selectmen at their October 28 meeting to provide an update on EDC activities. This annual report is required by ordinance. Mr. Crowther walked through the draft presentation outline, which depicts the EDC as a facilitator that identifies issues and coordinates across groups. Discussion ensued regarding how to best facilitate activities between stakeholder groups that are a mixture of appointed and elected officials, and among these officials and the business community.

b) Reports/updates to and from EDC, Planning, Zoning, and Board of Selectmen liaisons

Mr. Jodice noted that the Zoning Commission discussed the new signage at Drake Hill Mall, which was approved with modifications. He also said that the bed and breakfast application for 45 Old Farms Road was rejected, but that the applicant will be resubmitting their application. Discussion ensued regarding short-term rentals and whether the EDC should take a position on this matter.

Mr. Rice provided history on the subdivision at 80 Climax Road, which was recently approved by the Planning Commission. The original application was submitted under 8-30g, which bypasses local zoning regulations and requires a certain percentage of the development to be designated as affordable. The application was denied by the Planning Commission, and the decision was appealed by the applicant. The judge ruled in favor of the applicant, and a revised application was sent to the Planning Commission. The approved development will have 19 homes with 6 of the homes deed-restricted as affordable.

Ms. Meckel provided an update on the work of the Sustainability Team, which is working on bronze-level certification through the Sustainable CT program. She said that we have already done many of the required action items, and that we simply need to document all of our efforts. She also noted that we should take the opportunity to publicize all of the things we are currently doing around sustainability.

c) TIF Concept (staff report)

This item was tabled.

3) BOS Tourism/EDC referral regarding Tourism Committee duties and membership composition

Ms. Capriola said that this is an emerging issue out of the most recent Board of Selectmen meeting on June 24. She noted that the Tourism Committee's charge has been a topic of conversation, and that this matter was also raised during the creation of the new EDC. Ms. Capriola will provide a more formal charge on this referral at the July meeting.

4) Minutes

a) May 22, 2019

Mr. Freeman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Jodice seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Adjournment

Mr. Earl made a motion to adjourn at 7:30pm. Ms. Meckel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Appleby
Deputy Town Manager