



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, August 28, 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 5:33pm. Commission members Bill Freeman, Peter Van Loon (by phone), Ron Jodice, Tom Earl, and Charmaine Seavy were present. Ex officio members Bill Rice, Chair of the Planning Commission, Jackie Battos, Zoning Commission, and First Selectman Eric Wellman were also present. Staff members in attendance included Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; Michael Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development; and Tom Fitzgerald, Management Specialist. Others in attendance included Lisa Gray, Executive Director of Simsbury Chamber of Commerce.

1) Introduction of New Member

Charmaine Seavy was introduced as the newest member of the Economic Development Commission by Chairman Crowther. Ms. Seavy gave a brief introduction of her background and her excitement of being a part of the commission.

2) EDC Work Plan

a) Update from work streams/teams

- *Business Recruitment, Retention and Outreach* – Mr. Crowther updated on the group on the number of RSVPs for the upcoming Roundtable event on September 18th. Mr. Crowther stated the plan is to have Lisa Gray, Sarah Nielson and himself call the businesses they haven't heard from starting next week.
- *Business Incentives* – Mr. Earl presented his research on Business Incentives offered by other towns in Connecticut. He stated he had a lengthy conversation with an Economic Development Coordinator of a neighboring town and was walked through what that town does for business recruitment and retention when it comes to incentives. Mr. Earl provided the group with a summary he created of the Simsbury's Business Incentive Policy, with discussion ensuing of EDC members' thoughts on the summary and how this could be helpful if it were on the website for potential businesses to view. The group had a discussion on when in the application process incentives are brought up by either Town staff or by the business owner. Mr. Crowther asked the Commission members to provide any edits or feedback to Mr. Earl on his summary. Mr. Crowther also reviewed the

draft project evaluation guide, and asked members to provide him with edits or feedback.

- *Support Entrepreneurs/Marketing* – Mr. Freeman gave an update on a meeting he had with someone who had a potential business idea regarding camping. The group discussed how this is something that many people would like to see in town, but that the zoning regulations currently do not allow for it.
- *Strategic Vision* – Mr. Jodice provided a flow chart he created of the phases it takes to have a commercial project approved. The group expressed their appreciation on the work Mr. Jodice did and how it is a great overall view of the entire process. Mr. Jodice also brought up the idea of creating a SWOT analysis, and how the roundtables are assisting with that.

3) 2018/2019 Annual Report and Presentation to the Board of Selectmen Discussion

Chairman Crowther shared his initial draft of the Annual Report to the group. He stated that it is due to the Board of Selectmen at an October meeting, most likely targeting the 2nd meeting in October. He would like any updates and comments by the next EDC meeting in September so there is enough time to complete those edits and for staff that is assisting the EDC to review the report before it is presented to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Wellman stated that it would be helpful to have the items in the report categorized as follows: items the EDC is looking for guidance from the BOS on; items the EDC is looking for the BOS to take action on; and items that are simply informational.

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

First Selectman Eric Wellman gave an overview on the meeting held between two members of the Tourism Committee, two members of the EDC, himself and Town staff. The recommendations from that meeting include the concept of a hospitality task force, which would allow members of the business community and others involved in tourism and economic development to meet and collaborate on a regular basis. Ms. Appleby asked for the Commission's thoughts on the draft memo provided. Ms. Seavy mentioned that Tourism Committee would like to see the reference to a cap on members removed; she mentioned the committee would take as many people as they can get.

5) Housekeeping Items

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

Mr. Rice stated there is no update from the Planning Commission. Ms. Battos shared that the Zoning Commission had workshops on the proposed updates to the regulations, specifically in regards to agri-tourism.

Ms. Appleby reminded the group that the EDC membership slot on the Sustainability Team is vacant at the moment and asked if anyone would like to volunteer for the opening. No members volunteered to serve.

6) Minutes

a) July 24, 2019

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

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald
Management Specialist