

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
JUNE 4, 2015 – 4:45 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Cote, Dowling, Hatcher (5:00 p.m.), Legnos, Obrey, Preka, Vignato (4:55 p.m.),
Young
Absent: Mathanool
Other: Bob Frink, Al Valente, Mayor Rita Schmidt
Staff: Clarke, Gilot

Chairperson Dowling called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of meeting of May 7, 2015

MOTION: To approve the minutes of May 7, 2015 as amended.

Motion made by Preka, seconded by Legnos. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. REPORTS

1. Chair - The Chair's report was emailed to the Commission prior to the meeting for their review.
2. Work Plan Subcommittee – Chairperson Dowling said that she, Preka, Obrey and staff reviewed and ranked the recommendations submitted by commissioners. Populated information submitted, and bringing the top ranking items. Chairperson reviewed the top ranking items. The Commission should review the rankings, as well as any other suggestions not listed, and determine which they would like to focus on perhaps some short-term and some long-term. A business incentive portfolio was suggested.

The Committee concurred with the order of the items as presented. Outreach with the Town Council was discussed. Frink suggested that a quarterly status review with the Town Council, with an update on items 2 and 3. One of the meetings during the year would be the "annual review". Staff discussed the state statute which allows a percentage of the grand list to be appropriated for economic development purposes. If the projects are developed, the commission and staff can request funding during the budget process, with the assistance of staff. Young would like to include that item as number 6 in the top ranked items. Frink said November or December would be the time to submit that request to the Council. Item 2 was discussed; it should say "actively participating in the analysis". Cote thinks the commission should be attending the focus group meetings. Staff explained the focus group membership, which is open to all the commissions, including the EDC. The next meeting of the focus group is scheduled for July 20th. All dates will be finalized shortly and emailed to commission. Staff said any suggestions from the commission should be submitted to Reiner or Clarke, who will forward them to the consultant. Staff will send the survey back to the commissioners for any additional comments. Staff will send the link of the recording to the commissioners. Staff said the next work plan subcommittee meeting will determine timelines, and who will be working on the projects. The broad term ideas, working toward specific goals, and development of a work program for the commission was discussed. Obrey asked for the recreation director to discuss his proposal, which could be an economic driver.

These items will be reviewed monthly and should be added to the motion.

Motion: To adopt the proposed items as the work program for the EDC.

Motion made by Dowling, seconded by Preka. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Staff – The staff's report was e-mailed to the Commission prior to the meeting for their review. Staff reviewed her report on the market analysis kickoff, Thames River Heritage Park, water taxi, available property listing went live yesterday but may need to be updated. Staff is proposing to use \$25,000 from the Capital Improvement program to enlist the marketing consultant to provide an opportunity site study on the Mystic Education Center. Obrey offered to work with staff to reach out to realtors with regard to the property listing. The Chair asked staff to add Advocacy Opportunities to the staff report, rather than a separate item on the agenda.

Cote left at 5:40 p.m.

4. Liaisons:

Groton Business Association- Valente provided a quick update. The annual GBA update exceeded expectations with a good turnout and good press coverage. The speakers, representing the Navy and Electric Boat gave good news with regard to unemployment, and Groton is becoming a much more business-friendly town. No Pfizer speaker was available. With regard to the work plan presented, he agreed with #5 - identifying projects, and supporting the Heritage Park and ADZ.

Downtown Mystic Merchants – The DMM report was emailed to the Commission prior to the meeting. Valente said Hartley could not attend the meeting. He discussed the Pearl Street merchants affected by the streetscape project. They would like to advocate that some of the phase III funding go to fix that portion of Pearl Street as part of that phase. Some items the merchants would like include a more permanent wayfinding sign, recycling bins, flag pole holes on the poles, decorative trash bins. Staff said some of these items may be included in a CIP project budget. Staff is not sure but thinks that will be taken care of during this fiscal year. The pole is the hardest part – the Town doesn't own the poles, so nothing can be attached to the poles without permission from CL&P. Public Works is working on it. Frink said Frontier gave them permission. Valente asked staff to send a communication to the DMM (Judy and Rod) with that update.

Town Council – Councilor Frink reviewed his report.

Legnos left at 5:50 p.m.

Motion to accept the committee reports as reported was made by Young and seconded by Obrey. Motion passed unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Airport Development Zone – Staff had nothing new to report this month. Preka said he met with Kevin Dillon, the executive director of the Connecticut Airport Authority, who would like to bring international airlines to CT. The commission was polled and agreed to hold the July meeting at the Groton-New London Airport restaurant.
2. RFQ-Market Analysis/Zoning Audit – Staff provided an update on the agenda for the day which included stakeholder interviews, tour of the town in the morning and Mystic tour in the afternoon, followed by the focus group kickoff meeting in the evening. The

focus was on the zoning and subdivision regulations. The next focus group meeting will be on July 20th, and focus on market analysis. More interviews will be set up during the day, and the focus group meeting will be at 6 p.m.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. July Meeting Cancellation – Discussion

MOTION: To cancel the July 2nd meeting and hold a special meeting on July 9, 2015.

Motion made by Hatcher, seconded by Obrey. Motion passed unanimously.

The commission said they would hold the meeting at The Beacon restaurant at the Groton-New London Airport. Young will check with them and make arrangements.

2. Any Other Business

Obrey said she would like a presentation from recreation director on his proposal for a multi-field venue for sporting competitions. She would like to see if the commission can help him move his proposal forward. The committee discussed Birch Plain golf course, which is for sale.

Frink said he would like to get an update on the tax abatements granted by the Town for Building 114 and the sports center, and how they are working for the businesses. Frink said Building 114 might be another location for a remote meeting in the future.

Young said she attended the CERC Sitefinder showcase last week. She said a report came out from some source, maybe UCONN, which stated that southeastern Connecticut has not yet recovered from the recession, compared to other places in the country. The report was printed in The Day. Staff will try to get a copy of it.

Mayor Schmidt asked about the CURE center at Pfizer. Staff said the center was a little bit behind schedule getting permitting from the City, and should be open in September or October.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:05 p.m. made by Preka, seconded by Hatcher, so voted unanimously.

Tom Vignato, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Debra Gilot
Office Assistant III