

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
OCTOBER 18, 2012 – 12:15 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Fafard, Mathanool, Yatcko and Smith
Staff: Strother
Other: Marian Galbraith, Mayor City of Groton and Robert Frink, Citizen

Adoption of the 2013 Meeting Schedule

MOTION: To approve the 2013 EDC Meeting Schedule

Motion made by Mathanool, seconded by Yatcko, so voted unanimously

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 2, 2012 AND AUGUST 16, 2012 AND SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the August 2, 2012

Motion made by Smith, seconded by Mathanool, so voted 3 in favor, 1 abstention (Yatcko) Motion Carried

MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 16, 2012

Motion made by Yatcko, seconded by Smith, so voted 3 in favor, 1 abstention (Mathanool) Motion Carried

No action was taken on the September 20, 2012 minutes because there was not a quorum present of those who attended the meeting. The approval of the minutes will be added to the November meeting agenda.

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Discussion on Economic Gardening with Gary Goeschel of East Lyme and Deborah Donovan, Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer).

Deborah Donovan, Economic Development & Marketing Director for the Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) provided an overview of Economic Gardening concepts, noting that this type of program is not for start-up's or "mature corporations" but targets second stage companies that have been around a few years and have 10-100 employees. The program helps them use sophisticated data programs to identify information that will help them grow. Ms. Donovan distributed handouts on the topic.

Gary Goeschel II, Director of Planning for the Town of East Lyme, agreed that this is not a business recruitment tool, but a method to help existing fast growth entrepreneurial companies, or "gazelles," and build a nurturing environment for them. This includes a commitment to the best tools, theories, and practices including roles for the public sector/community. Mr. Goeschel provided a PowerPoint presentation on Economic Gardening.

During follow-up discussion, both Ms. Donovan and Mr. Goeschel noted that it is challenging for communities/agencies to have sufficient resources to carry on a

successful program. Ms. Donovan noted that this type of program was one of the goals in the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and that seCTer does have the ability to generate some of the data needed. Mr. Goeschel discussed a \$2,500 a year subscription to ESRI which East Lyme has (and is not a premium level subscription) and noted that it has been useful.

The EDC would like to research further how to address the resource needs of the towns/cities. Another issue to further review is if there is a certification definition/program for communities to have an economic gardening program, especially given that seCTer has some available tools. It would be desirable to test a case study.

The Commission and staff thanked Ms. Donovan and Mr. Goeschel for the information and discussion.

2. ZBA Referral #12-06 Northern Reach, Inc.

The Commission discussed this referral, and the following action was taken:

MOTION: The Economic Development Commission supports variance application #12-06 due to the following considerations

The site was previously utilized by more intense uses, which included auto sales and service and a screen printing business

The company has experienced great damage at their current location due to flooding at the site

Improved technology is now available to protect the water resources in this area of the community, and Groton Utilities input, as part of this reuse process, would assist in this effort

The Commission believes that this site would be a good location for this business while providing the opportunity to clean up the site and reuse an available building.

Motion made by Mathanool, seconded by Smith, so voted unanimously

3. Incentives

Since the last meeting, Bob Frink and Bill Smith have continued to review the information on proposed incentives. Strother reported that she had sent a draft of the potential incentives changes to the three Town staff members who review incentives requests prior to Town Council review (Town Manager, Finance Director and Director of Planning and Development). Staff has not heard back from them yet regarding a potential meeting date/time to discuss the incentives information.

Frink also thought it would be helpful if the Town Council, on an annual basis, determined how much they are willing to provide in that year as far as tax incentives.

Staff noted that she is researching what the recent designation of Groton as a Distressed Municipality means as far as other incentives/programs that might be available.

Paul Yatcko also noted he is researching potential utility programs/incentives, including identifying places in the system with excess power capacity.

4. Other

Staff noted that a Zoning Commission referral for Special Permit #330 had been received following the distribution of the agenda package.

MOTION: To add the Zoning Commission referral for Special Permit #330 to the agenda

Motion made by Smith, seconded by Fafard, so voted unanimously

Following discussion, the Commission did not have any comments on this referral.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

George Mathanool, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Barbara Strother
Economic Development Specialist