

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

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Fafard, Obrey, Mathanool, Dowling, and Smith  
Staff: Strother, Murphy and Norris  
Other: Marian Galbraith, Mayor City of Groton and Robert Frink, Citizen

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary)

Following Commission discussion on various options for officers' terms, the following actions were taken:

MOTION: To nominate Lian Obrey as Chairperson

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

MOTION: To nominate George Mathanool as Vice Chairperson

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

MOTION: To nominate Susan Dowling as Secretary

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2012 AND OCTOBER 18, 2012

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 20, 2012

Motion made by Obrey, seconded by Dowling, so voted 3 in favor, 2 abstentions (Smith and Mathanool) Motion Carried

MOTION: To approve the minutes of October 18, 2012

Motion made by Smith, seconded by Mathanool, so voted 3 in favor, 2 abstentions (Obrey and Dowling) Motion Carried

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Update on Staff Transition

Michael Murphy provided an overview on the efforts underway regarding the staff transition in Economic Development due to Barbara Strother's upcoming retirement. He noted that some adjustments have been proposed to the position that would include some sustainability/business economics. A request to fill the position has been submitted to Human Resources. It was noted that Rick Norris will be providing support to the Commission during the transition, and the goal is to have someone hired by February.

Commission members expressed some concerns that these changes might dilute the position at a time when the local economy is experiencing significant challenges. Lian Obrey distributed a draft letter to the Town Manager, which has not been sent yet, which expresses the need for the EDC to discuss with him the qualities that should be looked for in the person who will be in this position. Murphy felt the proposed adjustments will help us stay competitive and Norris also noted that this will open up energy opportunities to help businesses. Murphy agreed to provide the updated job description to the EDC when it has been cleared by Human Resources. The Commission agreed that they will not decide on whether to send the letter to the Town Manager until after they have reviewed the job description.

2. Economic Gardening

Staff distributed copies of the PowerPoint presentation provided at the October meeting by Gary Goeschel II, Director of Planning for the Town of East Lyme, and information that Robert Frink put together on a proposal for getting started with an Economic Gardening initiative in Groton. It was felt that training for the staff and Commission would be helpful in the early stages of Town undertaking the program. The Commission reviewed the materials and discussed ways to support these efforts including utilizing an intern, or engaging a college class for assistance in designing a program. Fafard noted that his business has utilized MBA students very successfully in the past. The Commission felt that some dedicated funding would be of assistance to this effort, and the following action was taken.

MOTION: The EDC recommends that \$500 in Economic Development funding be allocated towards this effort

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

3. Incentives

Due to time constraints, this issue was not discussed.

4. Enterprise Zone - Distressed Municipalities

Due to time constraints, this issue was not discussed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

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George Mathanool, Secretary  
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Barbara Strother  
Economic Development Specialist