

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 5, 2015 – 4:45 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Dowling, Preka, Cote, Young, Hatcher, Obrey, Vignato, Legnos (5:02),
Mathanool (5:07)

Excused:

Other: Valente, Frink

Staff: Clarke, Bronk, Post

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:54p.m.

MOTION: To amend the agenda, moving item number 5 Mark Berry under New Business to number 1

Motion made by Preka, seconded by Cote, so voted unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of meeting of October 1, 2015

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 1, 2015 meeting as written.

Motion made by Young, seconded by Hatcher, so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS- None

IV. REPORTS

1. Chairperson – Chair’s report was previously submitted by email for review. Dowling mentioned that the draft of the annual report was included in the packet and suggestions and recommendations for 2016 are welcome.
2. Strategic Planning Subcommittee – no meeting, no report.
3. Staff – Staff’s report was submitted in the agenda packet prior to the meeting for review. Staff continues to be proactive and engaged in business outreach both in existing businesses and outside opportunities. Staff discussed the interview with Business In Focus for the article featuring Groton. Staff, along with Valente, and Legnos participated and felt that it was successful. Staff mentioned that local businesses have started getting calls soliciting advertisements. Cote voiced his concern that it is much too expensive to advertise for many of the businesses. Staff is trying to negotiate the cost for smaller businesses. Cote suggested that Staff speak to Stamford who was featured in the past to see if they are happy with the outcome of being featured.

Staff submitted a referral to get authorization from Council to pursue the Brownfield Area-wide Revitalization Planning grant. The plan is to submit an application for the grant focusing on the Poquonnock Bridge Village area by the November 16th deadline. The Airport Development Zone application is complete and is on the agenda to be presented to Council.

4. Liaisons:

Groton Business Association- The GBA report was emailed to the commission prior to the meeting for their review. Valente provided a brief update. Fall festival was successful and they are preparing for the Holiday Lights Parade on December 5th. The GBA is also collaborating with the City ECDC and the Town EDC to have a meet & greet event as the city ECDC was put together recently.

Downtown Mystic Merchants – Valente stated that Judy Hartley is stepping aside as President of the Mystic Merchants Association.

Town Council – No report

MOTION: To accept the reports presented.

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

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Market Analysis and Zoning Audit Update- Focus Group meeting was held on October 29th with drafts of findings from both presented. Once drafts are finalized they will be sent out to Focus Group for review.

2. Strategic Planning- no meeting, no report

3. Airport Development Zone- A referral memo was drafted to be presented to the Town Council on Tuesday, November 10th.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Mark Berry, Director of Groton Parks and Recreation came to speak as requested by the EDC. Berry provided an overview of the Parks and Recreation Department stating that a strong program is a great asset to any Town and has a direct impact on the quality of life and creates a sense of place for residents. Berry reviewed many projects they are working on to capitalize on an emerging trend of an active, healthy lifestyle. They are working with Blue Trails, an interactive site that promotes hiking trails, Walk with a Doc program through L&M, a street fitness park that would reach a broader group that the current program is reaching, develop a natural playground to reintroduce kids to nature, offering more to the Senior Center which is already recognized as being top in the state, and creating more multi-purpose fields as we are about 4 short.

Preka stated that there was a lot of energy being spent working on all of the projects and asked if any one specifically was being fast-tracked or if there were completion dates for any of them. Berry said there was not at this time and most of these would be long range projects. Frink asked how we advertised, Berry said Facebook and the Discover Magazine. It was suggested that maybe having a booth at the next Fall Festival to promote all that Groton has to offer. Staff concluded with the fact that

Groton is special and that there is an emerging trend of a healthy/active lifestyle, we have both private and public amenities, and it might be obvious to the EDC but to others it might not be and we need to promote that.

2. Adoption of the 2016 Meeting Schedule

Motion to adopt the 2016 meeting schedule as proposed made by Preka, seconded by Cote, so voted unanimously.

3. Election of Officers

Chair asked for nominations from the floor, there were none

Motion to elect David Preka as Chair, Tom Vignato as Vice Chair, and Catherine Young as Secretary made by Legnos, seconded by Valente, so voted unanimously.

4. Market Analysis Update- Focus group met on October 29th. Staff has a rough draft and is making necessary changes. There will be a focus group meeting without the consultants. Young asked if there would be more specific recommendations with the draft then what was offered at the meeting in October, staff said that we will get more with the draft.

5. Airport Development Zone- As previously stated a referral memo was drafted and would be presented to Town Council. At this point the EDC has not formally announced their support and staff suggested now would be a good time to do that. A letter will be drafted and submitted to the Mayor for the meeting.

6. Annual Report- Dowling drafted an annual report for the EDC, she is requesting for suggestions/recommendations for improving development next year. Cote suggested that the commission contribute to what Dowling has already done. Dowling requested that all comments be in to her by the 16th so the draft can be completed and voted on at the next meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:32pm made by Preka, seconded by Legnos, so voted unanimously

Tom Vignato, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Lauren Post
Office Assistant II