

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MAY 1, 2014 4:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mathanool, Obrey, Cummings, Legnos, Preka, Young, Dowling (at 5:15)
Staff: Clarke

Also in attendance: Susan Dean-Shinbrot, Bob Frink, Genevieve Cerf, Bill Smith, Al Valente, Judi Hartley

The meeting was called to order at 4:41 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Frink met with Bill Fairbarn of New Samaritan, about developing the Noank School site with senior housing. New Samaritan owns Mystic River Homes.

Smith provided an update on the Plan of Conservation & Development that the draft document has been issued and the committee will have approximately 6 weeks to review it.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF regular meeting of April 3, 2014

Motion to approve the minutes made by Cummings, seconded by Mathanool. Motion passed unanimously (6-0-0)

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Business Incentives

Discussion tabled until June meeting.

2. Economic Gardening

Groton needs to figure out a way to move forward with Economic Gardening while awaiting the pilot program that seCTer has proposed. Clarke and EDC members need to figure out a way to conduct more outreach for business retention that could turn into economic gardening.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. FY 2015 Budget

Clarke explained that \$16,815 was proposed in the FY 15 budget for Economic Development and Town Council added \$40,100. A handout was passed around explaining one way the funds could be used if they are approved by RTM on Monday night.

The Commission would like to play a larger part in the work plan and budgeting for the economic development function in future years. Obrey suggested that EDC Commissioners should try to attend to support the budget.

Young moved that the Economic Development Commission support the economic development program and proposed funding levels for FY 2015 and that the Commission is looking forward to working together in the coming year. Seconded by Cummings. Approved unanimously (7-0-0)

2. Airport Development Zone

Young mentioned that at a recent Connecticut Airport Authority meeting, there was a discussion that the CAA would like Groton-New London Airport to be the next Airport Development Zone, now that the Oxford-Waterbury ADZ has proven to be successful. Young also provided the legislative background that enables the creation of ADZ's

Clarke explained that she has been working off and on this since August. At that time, the CAA had not established the parameters for evaluating newly proposed ADZ's, but with the approval of Oxford-Waterbury, there has been precedent set and we can follow their application. Clarke distributed a map that showed what an ADZ in Groton might look like. Clarke will continue to pursue obtaining Oxford's application prior to the next meeting.

Obrey mentioned that Columbus, Ohio has a tremendous clothing distribution market because of its airport. Mathanool said that the Catalyze proposal looked at utilizing an ADZ as well.

VI. REPORT OF COMMITTEES

1. Update to Plan of Conservation & Development- Report from EDC Liaison

Update provided by Smith at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Groton Business Association- Report from EDC Liaison

Al Valente, Co-Chair of GBA, reported that the GBA has been discussing the Maritime Heritage Park and seems to be in support of the concept. They will be reviewing more information in the near future, and are hoping that it will synergize with Thames Street and add components to tourism in the area.

VII. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff distributed a written report. Some highlights:

- Attended a meeting hosted by Senator Maynard in Hartford re: Water Taxis and the Maritime Heritage Park. It is possible that a pilot water taxi project may be running this summer
- Streetscape is moving along and the contractor has been very accommodating. There were a few kinks to work out with traffic patterns last week, but things are going smoothly this week. Approximately 700 feet of curb and side walk have been installed.

VIII. OTHER ITEMS

Obrey moved to recognize the applications of representatives from the Groton Business Association and Downtown Mystic Merchants Association as Ex Officio members of the Commission. Seconded by Mathanool. Motion approved 7-0.

A discussion ensued around attendance and upholding the Commission's bylaws. The general consensus was that if a member was absent from 3 consecutive meetings, without exception, a letter should be written and ask the member's intentions. It was requested that Staff reach out to Wood to determine whether her coursework was complete and whether she would be able to attend future meetings.

If Wood is not able to attend meetings, Obrey and Mathanool suggested supporting the recommendation of Andrew Lavery as a commission member.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:19 p.m. made by Dowling, seconded by Preka; passed unanimously.

Lian Obrey, Secretary
Economic Development Commission