

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MAY 7, 2015 – 4:45 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Cote, Dowling, Hatcher, Obrey, Preka (4:54), Young
Absent: Legnos, Mathanool, Vignato
Other: Frink
Staff: Reiner, Silsby

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

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of meeting of April 2, 2015

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the April 2, 2015 meeting, as amended.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff distributed a handout regarding the upcoming Groton Business Association's May breakfast scheduled for May 21, 2015. Those interested in attending should contact either Kristin or Deb Gilot in OPDS.

IV. REPORTS

1. Chairperson - The Chairperson's report was previously emailed to the EDC. It was noted that CERC training was held on 4/9/15 and the slide presentation was included in the agenda packet. She also attended the Committee of Chairperson's meeting. The slide presentation will be sent out to all EDC members.

2. Staff – The staff's report was e-mailed to the Commission prior to tonight's meeting for their review.

An inquiry was made about posting property listings on the Town's website. Staff will confirm that this has already been accomplished. Staff will also look into whether the Pfizer building that was demolished has been removed from the Town's website.

3. Liaisons

Groton Business Association- The report was e-mailed prior to tonight's meeting for the Commission's review.

MOTION: To accept the report

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

Downtown Mystic Merchants – A report was distributed and updates were given.

Town Council – The Town Council Report was submitted in writing. Frink summarized by reporting that he attended a training session at the library on 4/9/15. He noted that the Town Council passed the requested FYE 2016 budget for OPDS on 4/15/15. Staff gave a recap of what was approved by the Town Council and RTM. There will be 2 new full-time employees in OPDS; an Assistant Director of OPDS (in lieu of a vacancy) and a Manager of Economic and Community Development. Staff noted that these positions are open to anyone who is interested.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Airport Development Zone – Staff informed the Commission that they are waiting for additional information from the State legislature. Discussion followed about how much will be expanded and/or approved by the State, potentially. It was noted that this issue, being considered by the State, is being combined with another item.

2. RFQ-Market Analysis/ Zoning Audit – Staff stated that the first meeting will be held on 5/27/15 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 1. The importance of all EDC members attending these meetings was noted by Staff. Discussion followed about the kick-off meeting and the purpose of the focus group. An inquiry was made as to how members were chosen for this focus group. Staff will send out the final list of focus group members. An inquiry was made about the large number of people serving on the focus group, which could hinder making final decisions. Staff explained about the procedure, noting that the consultants will run the meetings. An overview of how the meetings will proceed was given by Staff.

A suggestion was made that the consultants attend the Groton Business Update breakfast on Thursday, May 21, 2015 at Groton Inn & Suites.

The vision of the Town Council was brought up relative to the POCD and how it guides the Town.

An inquiry was made about the status of the revised draft POCD. It was noted that the POCD can be amended after the market analysis has been completed in Groton. Public hearing requirements were noted as far as adoption of the final POCD document. The importance of including the market analysis in the revised 2012 POCD and following through with what is included in the 2002 POCD was addressed.

3. By-Laws Committee Report and Vote to Approve Amendments to By-Laws – Young stated that the revised by-laws were included with the agenda packet. Background information about the revision process was given. The Town Manager and Staff were asked to review the document. Draft by-laws have been sent to the Town Clerk but no feedback has been received as yet. Details were given about a few of the minor revisions that were made.

Young referred to the 2/15/15 EDC meeting when the Commission voted to add “Advocacy and Ambassadorship Opportunities” to the agenda. She then suggested to also add “Advocacy and Opportunities” to Section 5.

MOTION: To accept the By-laws with the amendments noted tonight

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

Young referred to the 4/2/15 EDC meeting whereby Hatcher requested to add a mission statement to the by-laws. That would be referred to the work plan subcommittee.

4. CERC Training – Staff will email the latest information to the EDC. Reiner pointed out the importance of reviewing the 3rd section on page 44.

The importance of reviewing CERC data sheets was brought up, as well as the importance of factoring in Groton schools, which will play a major role going forward.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Work Planning Discussion and Establishment of Sub-Committee – Staff distributed a list of EDC priorities (6/1/15) and potential future EDC priorities (2015/2016). These lists can be used as a baseline for EDC going forward and can be considered for the work plan. It was recommended that holding an annual meeting with the Town Council, RTM and Zoning Commission would be added to the work plan. Pertaining to the market analysis, information was given about the Request For Qualifications (RFQ), which has been sent out for implementing a consultant and hiring new Staff to drive the projects. Additional information was given about costs for the market analysis. Staff will be sending out a memo about what the consultants are proposing to do. A reminder about the 5/26/15 meeting will also be sent out referencing the 4 most important items to be considered. Discussion followed about the costs, opportunities, achievable goals, and setting up sub-committees.

Staff gave a timeline that he has in mind for the next 4 or 5 projects to be accomplished within the next 2 to 3 years. Projects and policies written in the 2006 Economic Development Strategic Plan should be reviewed. Staff explained the rationale of short-term and long-term priorities for the Town of Groton and the EDC. An inquiry was made about the intent of the EDC priorities distributed earlier tonight.

A decision was made for each member to email their top 5 priorities to Staff and/or Dowling by Friday, May 15th, who will then consolidate them accordingly.

MOTION: To establish a sub-committee/work plan and have Dowling chair the sub-committee

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

Staff will email the final list to all EDC members in addition to other important topics. Having a mission statement was discussed.

Obrey and Cote will also serve on the sub-committee. The first sub-committee meeting will be held sometime prior to the June EDC meeting.

Frink left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

2. Advocacy and Ambassadorship – No action

3. Any Other Business

How to bring more people into Groton and what the EDC can do to enhance that goal was brought up. The importance of assisting business owners was noted.

Staff gave background information about the development process and the importance of making development companies feel comfortable. Reiner requested that the EDC assist him at the 5/26/15 meeting when speaking to the Town Council.

Another topic brought up for discussion was about the property at the top of Fort Hill Road in regards to recreation. OPDS will put together a presentation with the assistance of Recreation Director Mark Berry.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:31 pm made by Preka, seconded by Young, so voted unanimously

Lian Obrey, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Robin Silsby
Office Assistant II