

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
August 3, 2017 – 4:45 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Dowling, Preka, Melin, Young, Cote, Hatcher (5:00), Mathanool (5:17)
Brooks
Absent: Legnos
Other: Peggy Roberts, Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, Nishant Sahoo,
Merrill Lynch Mystic
Staff: John Burt, Town Manager, Eisenbeiser, Post

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:52 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were not finalized and will be included in the agenda for the September meeting for a vote.

Eisenbeiser requested to add a proposed zoning map amendment in new business.

A motion to add the new business item was made by Dowling, seconded by Young; so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS- None

IV. REPORTS

Chair- Preka did outreach around the town this past month with various businesses. He consistently receives positive feedback when speaking to businesses.

1. Staff- Staff report was previously submitted by email and was reviewed by Eisenbeiser.

Marketing/Website – GMTV staff at the library will help to provide video footage for use on the new website. Staff is coordinating with them on a script at this time. Video footage will be obtained via helicopter at the Airport open house on August 19th.

Logo/Branding Contest – Staff is at the final stage of the design process and is looking to have an official unveiling of the design prior to September. The two participants who were selected as the preferred designer of the logo and slogan were recognized at the Town Council meeting on August 1st. 1st place for the logo design was awarded \$250 and 2nd place for the slogan was a gift certificate to Coastal Air.

CT Next/Innovation Places – Staff is teaming up with UConn Avery Point as part of a broader project to help with the industry of undersea technology. UConn and URI submitted jointly for a grant that they won from the US Navy,

a lot of that will be about the workforce development specifically for the openings at EB.

ICSC – Staff participated in the International Council for Shopping Centers Conference and Trade Show held in mid-July in Boston. This event focuses on retailers, brokers of retail properties, and owners of retail property. Staff, along with seCTer had a table at this event to bring more attention to Groton. Staff also took the opportunity to market the excess Town properties in hopes to result in more/better proposals.

2. Liaisons:

Groton Utilities – Brooks submitted a report via email for review. Brooks stated that all of their projects continue to progress. The water treatment plant is moving forward. The town approved the site plan for the Walker Hill Water tank replacement. On July 26th the Utilities Commission approved the street light upgrade project. It will now go to the Mayor and Council on August 7th. This is a collaborative effort between the Town, City, and GU. Two of the three solar gardens off of route 12 are on line. The rate comparison between GU and Eversource was released. Brooks will have a more accurate report next month for the rate comparison but as of Eversource's last standard offer GU's rates are 20% lower. Cote asked if the streetlight project was all LED and what the timeline is. Brooks stated that it was and they expect to have it completed by the end of the year. Young asked if the Walker Hill water tank would be larger. Brooks said it would be 33% larger. Melin asked if there is ever a time that the town could benefit from Groton Utilities Service. Brooks stated that the electric territories that are set are more than a century old so he doesn't see that happening with regulated markets.

Business Outreach – Preka stated that business outreach is so important and that we really need to stay on track with it. It is a topic that they agreed on that they really need to pursue. Cote stated that they made attempts to accomplish some things since the last meeting but they couldn't meet due to travel schedule. He proposed that they meet next week as he doesn't want to have it continue unresolved. Cote requested that they have information on 10-12 companies that have gone through the permitting process in the last year or so. Eisenbeiser stated that we will do whatever we can to facilitate and get them the information. Dowling asked if Cote and Melin are on the same page as far as using the permits as a guide. Melin stated they weren't but will discuss that at the subcommittee level. Cote stated they should not lose another month of outreach and for the time being the commissioners should select businesses in the category that had previously been selected to visit. Young asked that when the subcommittee meets that they use the market analysis as part of the discussion. Cote stated they would. Preka thanked the subcommittee for all they are doing.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. General Discussion – Dowling stated that she and Young attended the Zoning Commission meeting on the map amendment for the Seely School.

Young stated that the Airport Open House is on the 19th and she is happy that OPDS is going to participate. Young asked that they touch on the economic development for the airport as well as the ADZ to which Eisenbeiser agreed.

Young stated she was happy that John Burt came to tonight's EDC meeting. She would like to invite him to a future meeting to find out what his goals are for the town and what he sees the EDCs roll as. Dowling agreed that it is a great idea to have him here. Young asked if there was a particular month that we could ask him back. Preka stated he will send an email to invite him for September or October. Hatcher suggested October may be best to give him a chance to get acclimated. Preka will reach out and invite him to the October meeting.

Melin suggested that they talk about how work is done with others groups in the community. Melin said that there are so many organizations working on Economic Development in the area but each on their own items and they aren't working together. If they could figure out as a group a few things to target on and do well. He suggests that all the leaders get together and decide on a few items to work on and they bring them back to the respective groups they could possibly get more accomplished. Mathanool agrees with what Melin is saying, going forward the EDC needs to be more cohesive, more project orientated. Mathanool suggested that they invite the new City Economic Development Specialist. We need to be collaborative and not separate so they work collectively so that they have the same goals.

Mathanool suggested that the Chair or Vice Chair of TRIP should be invited to an EDC meeting to give an update of what is going on. TRIP is formulated with three entities, Town of Groton, City of Groton, and the City of New London. All three have to work together for the region to spur innovation and entrepreneurship. Mathanool thinks that the EDC needs to be aware of what is going on. Mathanool thinks it would be a good idea to invite these different economic development leaders so they may drive the engine of this region collaboratively.

Young stated that seCTer provides the economic development umbrella for the 22 towns. They have their meetings, projects, and the Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) plan which was approved at both the local and state level and is now at the federal level. Eisenbeiser explained that Staff is a representing member of the region for seCTer and played an integral role in developing the CEDS document. CEDS is the guiding document for the region and is something that this commission could consult for guidelines. Mathanool noted that the Director of seCTer is involved in TRIP. Eisenbeiser stated she was the treasurer of TRIP and they could have her come speak to the commission. Eisenbeiser also stated that if the commission wanted to reference the CEDS guide it could be worthwhile. Melin suggested that maybe the business outreach subcommittee should reference CEDS when deciding what direction to go with outreach.

Preka spoke about the vacancy the EDC currently has and asked for recommendations from the commissioners so that he could submit them to the Town Manager. Hatcher stated that she thought that Preka had already requested that and was going to email the Town manager. Preka had only

received one recommendation at this time and was asking for a few before he sent them.

2. Zoning Map Amendment ZCH17-01 Referral – The referral that was submitted to the zoning commission was included in the EDC packet. Young and Dowling represented the EDC and Dowling read the referral into record. It was approved unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Zoning Map Amendment – The owners of 1 Bank Street in downtown Mystic have submitted an application requesting a change in the zoning of the property from RS8 to WDD. The property is located next to Mystic Pizza. Dowling asked what the con would be. Eisenbeiser said with any change it could feel that you may be encroaching on the neighborhood but with the location of this property it is closer to current businesses than residential. Melin asked about the parking and if we have looked into that issue.

Dowling made a motion for the EDC to support the zoning map amendment for 1 Bank Street from RS-8 to WDD, Hatcher seconded; so voted unanimously.

Melin would like to formally request addressing the parking in Mystic between Groton and Stonington. Melin stated they should know what the overall plan for parking is between the two communities. Ms. Roberts stated that Jason Vincent would be the contact in Stonington. Eisenbeiser recommended that they talk to the Planning Department and see if they would come in and speak to the commission. Also see if they think it is worthwhile to bring someone in from the outside right away or if they can bring the commission up to speed from an internal stand point. Ms. Roberts suggested including the Downtown Mystic Merchants in on the discussion when it happens.

V. ADJOURNMENT

1. A motion to adjourn at 6:19 p.m. made by Preka, seconded by Hatcher; so voted unanimously.

Dave Cote, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Lauren Post
Office Assistant II