

MINUTES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
August 4, 2016 – 4:45 P.M.  
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Dowling, Preka, Young, Cote, Mathanool (5pm), Hatcher (5:08)  
Absent: Vignato, Legnos  
Other: Obrey, Valente, Nault, Barber  
Staff: Eisenbeiser, Post

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES June 2, 2016 meeting

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the June 2, 2016 meeting as amended.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS- None

IV. REPORTS

1. Chairperson – Preka stated that the meeting with Nate Kelly was very productive and thanked everyone who could attend. Preka spoke to Kelly after the meeting and Kelly was impressed with the questions/comments made by the group and encouraged the group to continue with future workshops. Preka stated that it is important to be on time to the meetings and for them to start at the agreed upon start time of 4:45p.
2. Staff –Staff report was previously submitted by email for review.

Mystic Education Center- The Town received the grant in the amount of \$50,000 for marketing the property. The strategy is not just to auction the property but to release an RFP and accept proposals to get the best development opportunity for the property.

Municipal property redevelopment- This is ongoing and feedback is helpful. We are putting together a list of interested parties; if anyone from the EDC has contacts that may be interested send them to Staff. The more contacts we market the property to the better the response will be when we put out the RFP. Young asked if the RFP process has been discussed with the Town Council. Eisenbeiser stated they had presented it to the Town Council and they were happy with the process.

Northeast Real Estate Business- Staff placed an advertisement in the magazine promoting Groton and our focus on economic development. The magazine was distributed at the ICSC which Bronk attended in June. Mathanool asked if this was the only publication we are/will advertise in, Eisenbeiser said there are more magazines out there we can look into. Mathanool stated he isn't a fan of

this particular one and that we should look into others. He feels it hasn't made a difference in the past. Eisenbeiser said that we will look into other publications.

ADZ- Staff is still working with CERC to finalize the application and plan for a submittal to DECD in August.

GreatBlue Research Survey- Staff handed out a memo with info on the GreatBlue survey. GreatBlue will begin contacting residents and business owners beginning August 15<sup>th</sup>, Eisenbeiser asked the EDC members to please let their contacts know the survey will be taking place and to please participate.

3. Liaisons:

Groton Business Association – Valente stated that the meeting held at the Avery Point Campus was well received and well attended. There was a presentation from UConn Technology Incubation Program (TIP) where they offer technically based startup companies shared resources. Valente stated it was an eye opener and hopefully there will be some companies that will hatch, grow, and stay in Groton. The next GBA meeting will be held at Shoreline Office Suites.

Downtown Mystic Merchants – Valente stated that sales in July in downtown Mystic were up over previous July's. There are very few vacant store fronts, Chapter One, a restaurant will open where Azu was previously located, across the street from there will be an upscale liquor store, and a Breakfast and Lunch restaurant "Rise" will be opening soon downtown as well. Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce will hold its 59<sup>th</sup> Mystic Outdoor Art Festival August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and are expecting 85,000 attendees, Mystic Eats food fest will be held on September 9<sup>th</sup>. District tourism has limited funds, they are using reserve funds and Valente wrote a letter of support on behalf of the DMMA. Merchants feel that the sidewalks are dirty and need to be cleaned downtown, Valente wrote a letter to the Department of Public Works in hopes they will be cleaned in time for Art Festival. Young asked if the EDC should send a letter of support for the tourism funds, Barber said at their last Town Council meeting the Council requested that Oefinger write a letter from the Town Council regarding the tourism funding. Obrey suggested creating a petition.

RTM – The topic being voted on at the RTM is getting the School Facilities Initiative put through for a referendum vote. She asked that the EDC talk to people about it, it is more than just for the children but also for the economic impact on the town. Obrey said the situation needs to be corrected, the RTM will vote to get it on the ballot. Obrey suggested someone come to talk to the committee about the economic impact this has on the Town. The meeting is on Wednesday at 7:30p, Preka asked that we support them.

Air and Sea Celebration still need volunteers and there are still tickets available to attend, it will really be a great event. A portion of proceeds will go to bring back the sail effort.

Town Council – No report submitted

4. Subcommittee- No meeting, no report

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Business Outreach- Preka stated that the brochures have been created and each commission member has some, it is time to get out to the businesses. Cote has done some outreach. He explains what the EDC is about and that there has been a change in the priority of economic development. Cote also has asked if the businesses would be willing to come and speak to the commission. Cote said it can be short, introduce yourself as a member of the EDC. It means a lot to the people; businesses have been around awhile and have never heard from the Town. 60-70% of businesses don't even realize there is an EDC. Preka encourages people to track the progress, go to one business a month. Cote said it should be a line item that shows up on the agenda each month so people can expect to talk about the businesses they went to. Preka also suggested that it is emailed to staff once the business is visited.
2. Strategic Planning- Top 6 Priorities – All commission members stated that the workshop went well. Young wants to make sure we get comments back before the next meeting. Eisenbeiser stated that Staff will provide the comments when they are received but that he thought it would be possible that they would be before the next scheduled meeting.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. EDC Meeting Timeframe- Preka stated that meetings begin at 4:45 pm. He started allotting time to each agenda item to keep the meeting on track. Preka is looking for feedback about the start time of the meeting because it is rare that the meeting starts on time. Cote states 5p works best for him personally, Dowling stated she is flexible, and Hatcher said she doesn't have a preference. Preka said that it is something that we will discuss next meeting and if the 4:45 pm start time needs to be changed we can discuss it then.

2. Joint City/Town EDC- Preka stated at this time the city hasn't been successful in finding a time that they can have a separate meeting from their regular meetings. Obrey said that their chair stepped down but the rest of the commission is still interested in having a joint meeting. The water taxi project has helped the City build a relationship with New London and they want to do the same with the Town.

Hatcher suggested that Preka sit down with the interim chair to pick a meeting topic to get the ball rolling making it easier to pick a date and time. Preka stated he does think that the date should be picked first because that seems to be the most difficult obstacle, finding a topic would be easier. Obrey suggested that whatever the date/time is the meeting location should rotate between the Town and the City so there is no animosity between the EDC's. Nault suggested that we have a meeting on the development on Thames Street stating it is something that is important to both the Town and the City. Valente agreed with Nault that Thames Street should be the project that we should work on with the City EDC. Obrey stated that there is a committee for the heritage park and suggested we invite them to speak at the Town EDC meeting to give an idea as to where the Town fits and could help. Preka will reach out to Penny from the Heritage committee as well as Mayor Galbraith.

3. General EDC discussion- Preka is planning to set up a meeting with Oefinger and Bronk to discuss making a change in the size of the commission. He stated that it can be challenging to make up a quorum and he would like to discuss that with Bronk and

Oefinger. Preka asked the members to submit names if they have anyone they feel would make a good addition to the commission. It was suggested that a letter should be sent to commission members after the second missed meeting. Hatcher suggested that Preka brings any names the EDC comes up with to Oefinger. Preka agreed that he would do that.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:57 pm made by Dowling, seconded by Hatcher; so voted unanimously.

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Catherine Young, Secretary  
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Lauren Post  
Office Assistant II