

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
September 7, 2017 – 4:45 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 1

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Dowling, Preka, Melin, Young, Cote, Mathanool (5:15p), Brooks
Absent: Hatcher, Legnos
Other: Valente, Obrey
Staff: Bronk, Eisenbeiser, Post

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:56 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 6, 2017

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the July 6, 2017 meeting

Motion made by Dowling, seconded by Melin; so voted unanimously.

August 3, 2017

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the August 3, 2017 meeting

Motion made by Young, seconded by Cote; so voted unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS- None

IV. REPORTS

Chair- Report was submitted by email and reviewed by Preka.

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

Marketing/Website – Staff anticipated the end of October for the launch of the new website. Aerial video was obtained by GMTV staff for use on the website.

Aviation Day – Eisenbeiser and Bronk participated in Aviation Day. A table was set up with a variety of marketing materials, with emphasis on the economic benefits of the airport.

Logo/Branding Contest – Staff put the final rendering of the logo on display for the commission. The logo will be used to replace the town seal when marketing Groton. Eisenbeiser stated that it has been given to the web designer and others that are working with us on marketing to integrate it into the different materials.

CT Next/Innovation Places – Staff continues to work with seCTer on the grant. They are close to hiring an executive director for TRIP.

Doing Business In Groton Guide – Bronk stated that this guide will help to guide new businesses when starting up. Staff expects a final draft within the week. Bronk stated that the draft will be provided to as many businesses as possible letting them know the document exists. Melin suggested putting an ad in the paper stating the guide is available and if interested people should provide an email to Staff to obtain it. It is another way to build the email base.

Mystic ED – Bronk stated that we are looking to release the RFP in October. There are many interested developers.

Groton Heights – Staff drafted proposed rezoning language that will be submitted to the City in mid-September. Staff has been showing the property all along. Obrey asked that we notify the commission of when the public hearing is. Bronk will let them know.

Seely School – This is fourth in priority of the redevelopment projects. The zoning change was approved by the Zoning Commission. An RFP will be released in 2018.

Obrey asked which rotary club Staff is working with for the Wayfinding Signage Plan. Bronk stated the Mystic Rotary club approached them to partner on the project. Obrey suggested the Groton rotary to which Bronk responded that he would be willing to work with them as well.

2. Liaisons:

RTM – Obrey reported that this past month the RTM has had conversations with the Superintendent regarding the schools, Police Chief regarding the cameras that the force will begin using as well as the pistols as they are antiquated. Obrey stated that it appears that the referendum won't be on the ballot in November regarding the status of the RTM. If it is decided to do it outside of a scheduled vote it can be an additional cost of approximately \$20,000. There was a lot of participation during the public hearing regarding the future of the RTM.

GBA – Report was previously submitted by email for review. Valente stated that Bailey worked extremely hard with Young to put on Aviation day, it was a great day. Groton Fall festival table registration is down. Valente asked the EDC to spread the word. Young requested that Valente send out the flyer to the EDC.

DMM – Report was previously submitted by email for review. Valente stated that downtown businesses are having a great year. Valente said that it makes a difference when there are no vacancies. Central Hall should have steel going up this fall. Mystic Eats is scheduled for September 8, 9, and 10. They are still looking for volunteers. Grass and Bone is open on the Stonington side of Mystic and Ivory Ella is opening up a retail shop on West Main Street.

Groton Utilities – Report was previously submitted by email for review. Brooks reported that a notice to proceed has been issued for the water treatment plant, the water main project is nearing completion, the street light replacement in the city has been approved, and a new data center will be put in the basement of

City Hall. Brooks said there will be a ribbon cutting at Solar Farm on 9/21 at 11a. Groton Utilities standard offer is still 20% less than Eversource.

Business Outreach – The Subcommittee had a meeting August 9th. Cote reported that it was productive. The minutes from that meeting were submitted for review and summarized by Cote. Mathanool asked what they wanted to know about EB suppliers. Melin stated that since EB is growing they could help reach out to those businesses who may be suppliers. Melin also stated that with additional employees moving to the area what could businesses do to enhance the sense of place. Mathanool stated that there is an effort on the state side to target the suppliers and that it is difficult to find out who the suppliers are due to secrecy. Mathanool also said that there is a Concierge established to try to help the families of people coming in to the area but that they would show them all of New London County not just Groton. Obrey said the suppliers have to get clearance and the Subbase used to have a program that interested parties could learn about the contracts as well as what they would need to do to get clearance. It might be good to reach out to them and get leads that way. Mathanool stated there are also the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance and the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board that may be useful. Connecticut Business & Industry Association was also mentioned. Cote asked which of the options is the commission most interested in pursuing. Preka stated that he would be in favor of options one and three for the Business Outreach; Dowling agreed adding that option two would be her last choice. Young asked Bronk what he thought would be most useful. Bronk would be inclined to choose option three as far as targeting goes.

Dowling made a motion that the commission focus on option three, focusing on the geographic locations (downtown Groton, Route 12/184 quadrant, Mystic) for outreach. The motion was seconded by Melin, so voted unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. General Discussion – Preka stated that he went to Garden City in Cranston, RI. Retail is changing from the typical malls to an outside shopping experience with retail and restaurants combined. Preka stated that we need to find what will bring people to our town. Bronk stated that we need that sort of identity in Downtown Groton.

Young asked if he had reached out to John Burt. Preka stated that he will early next week.

Cote asked if there was anything Young could highlight from her outreach that she submitted. Young stated there wasn't really more than what was written in her report that was submitted but the business owner mentioned that he was building a new building and was planning to expand out of state.

Young provided a handout for the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition. The Coalition has a program called Cultural Connections. The purpose is to promote and connect all things cultural. Young stated that there are Economic Development Commissions from other towns that are listed as a cultural connection. Different venues in their towns that you can exhibit art or host plays etc. are listed. Young asked if it was something the commission would

consider doing. The members all thought it was a great idea and something they should pursue. Preka stated he thinks Young would be great doing it. Young agreed to take the lead setting it up and providing any information that was needed.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Accomplishments – Preka asked the commission what they thought they have achieved this past year and if they were happy with what they have done since January. Dowling asked if they have supported OPDS in a meaningful way. Preka stated that he thinks it is good to look back. Bronk said that the EDC is always the most active out of all the boards and commissions to support initiatives. Young stated that people should be visible in the business community. Cote said he likes the direction they are going, it is frustrating that things take so long but the direction, and their effort is positive and will lead to a great 2018. Cote said if they keep moving and doing what they are doing they will make a difference. Melin thinks they could use the question to set them up for next year. It will help strengthen the path they take for next year.
2. Commissioner Positions – Preka is looking to see who is interested in the different positions for next year. Dowling thinks that Young would be a perfect person to Chair the commission. Cote stated that he isn't interested in the Vice Chair position due to his schedule but would continue as secretary if no one else was interested in holding that position. Mathanool asked if Hatcher would be interested in Vice Chair and that they should check with her since she would be the next to serve as an officer. Cote also suggested Melin for Vice Chair. Preka stated that he was just looking to get an idea and to bring up the topic so they aren't doing it last minute. Preka also stated he would like to reach out to Legnos. As a commissioner commitment is important and with multiple meetings missed Preka felt it was time to reach out. Cote asked if he received any recommendations for potential commissioners, Preka replied only one. Melin stated that he would have interest in a leadership position. He asked if there was something in the by laws regarding seniority. It was explained that there was none but just a courtesy.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 6:37 p.m. was made by Dowling, seconded by Cote; so voted unanimously.

Dave Cote, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Lauren Post
Office Assistant II