

MINUTES

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MADDEN ROOM
SOUTH WINDSOR TOWN HALL**

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, April 27, 2016
TIME: 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chairperson Paul Burnham, Dwight Johnson, Joseph Kennedy, James Murray, Louise Neary, Linda Jeski, William Jodice, Alternate John Mitchell (sat for Susan Burnham), Alternate David Marsh (sat for Wayne Kilburn) and Alternate David Starr (sat for Edwina Futtner)

ABSENT: Susan Burnham, Edwina Futtner, Wayne Kilburn and Alternate Cindy Beaulieu

ALSO PRESENT: Carolyn Mirek, Town Council liaison

- 1. Call Meeting to Order:** 7:32pm
- 2. Roll Call:** The above-mentioned members were introduced.
- 3. Other Business**

Michele Lipe, Director of Planning – Economic Development Projects Update: Ms. Lipe gave an update of projects that are happening around South Windsor.

- Panera Bread's new restaurant is now under construction
- There is no new information on the Evergreen Walk big box store application
- Text amendment for condos has been withdrawn may see other text amendment submitted for another location
- The zone change for housing units on Clark Street, "Clark Estates II", has been approved for units of moderate housing with a 40 year deed restriction. Prospective buyers must become qualified to buy the unit. This type of housing restriction hasn't been used in recent years. A transition zone will consist of 23 units.
- Chairperson P. Burnham asked about the planned demolition of tobacco sheds and if there's been any response from neighbors. Ms. Lipe is not involved with the demolition but hasn't heard of the town receiving any input.
- Kenlin LLC has withdrawn their application and are no longer pursuing property in South Windsor due to opposition at a recent Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. No action was taken at the meeting by the ZBA.
- A certificate of occupancy was issued for the 2nd biggest industrial building on Sullivan Ave. It is a food warehouse and distribution center for places like Dollar Tree.
- An application may be coming for old Franklin Distributors building at 140 Nutmeg Road. The top soil screener business would fit the approved uses for the building. It is an Irish company, equipment is made in Ireland. Chairperson P. Burnham if they would be coming before the commission and Ms. Lipe indicated that she is unsure but that Peter DeMallie is representing them.
- The brewery is under construction

- There is a meeting tomorrow, Thursday, April 28th, regarding One Buckland Plaza and it is anticipated that construction should begin soon.
- Final review of the plans for Staybridge Suites are underway
- Commissioner Neary asked for an update on the Star Center. Ms. Lipe informed the commission that the application was withdrawn last fall due to unforeseen costs.
- There are two new businesses on Rt. 5, a car repair and wholesale car business
- The application for demolition on Kimberly Drive has been approved but hasn't yet begun.
- Next month, a certificate of occupancy will be sought for condos on Pleasant Valley Road. The condos are single family and duplex units with a price point of about \$200,000.
- Work has begun at the site of the new elementary school. Soil berms with a cap have been elongated due to costs to remove contaminated soil from the site.

4. Public Participation-None.

5. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from Regular Meeting on 3/30/2016

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Mitchell and **seconded** by Commissioner Kennedy to approve the minutes of March 30, 2016 with the following corrections:

- Add Cindy Beaulieu to the list of members absent
- Item 7 New Business should read "...addition 'of' 7,200 sq. ft. ..."
- Item 7 New Business should read "...captured into an underground system and there..."

The motion was approved unanimously. Motion passed.

6. Old Business

Sub-committee report regarding website updates: Commissioner Marsh and Commissioner Jeski shared a two handout [attached] about the proposed website structure and content overview. The first document displays the logical structure of what it will look like with main and subpages and content to be included. The second document lists three levels of difficulty in obtaining or creating the website content and where some of the content could be obtained such as CERC and State statistical data.

Commissioner Neary asked if the new EDC website would link from town's main page. Commissioner Marsh indicated that there could be a link from the town's site and from wherever the commission thinks traffic could be driven to the EDC site.

Commissioner Marsh indicated that there are ways to manipulate pages to generate higher search results that could be implemented.

Commissioner Marsh explained that under the 'Opportunities' section, CERC Site Finder could be used to guide searches to show South Windsor results for available commercial sites.

However not all realtors place their listings on CERC but there is enough information there to

generate beneficial results. A separate listing of available South Windsor properties could be created by reaching out to realtors not on the CERC site instead of linking directly to their sites. The 'Featured' properties section could highlight different properties and Chairperson P. Burnham mentioned that the EDC might want to remain neutral. However in Commissioner Marsh's analysis of other EDC websites he discovered that many other EDC commissions do promote individual properties. Commissioner Kennedy suggested that the Rt. 5/291 corridor should be highlighted.

Commissioner Marsh indicated that the 'Current Developments' sections could include information that was reported by Ms. Lipe earlier in the meeting.

Commissioner Marsh then suggested that the 'Business & Developer Resources' section could outline the stages of application the application approval process. Information on available incentives could provide detail on exactly what they are. The 'External Info' and 'External Agencies' sections could include information for small business such as agencies and development centers. Commissioner Marsh envisions the list to be a maximum of 15 links with an explanation of what each of them is.

The 'South Windsor Process' section could include photographs and a workflow summary to counter the amount of text.

Commissioner Marsh viewed many desirable characteristics for EDC coordinators on other sites.

Information such as stories about the area, shipping availability, economic history trends and development could also be included.

When looking at other towns Commissioner Marsh noticed that other towns have partnerships with other agencies and this is one area in which South Windsor is lacking. Maybe the new EDC Coordinator could look into creating partnerships or conferences which could then be highlighted in a 'Partnerships' section.

Commissioner Neary asked the Chairperson if he'd attended the recent meeting regarding an EDC coordinator and Chairperson P. Burnham indicated he was unable to attend but that the Town Council is trying to decide what they will do. Commissioner Neary wonders whether the coordinator will be able to do everything related to the website. Chairperson P. Burnham is not sure if the position will be in the final budget due to the governor's change to the State budget. Any cuts will have to come from town side since the Board of Education budget has already been approved. Commissioner Kennedy believes that if the assistant town manager position is funded, that person would take over the role of EDC Coordinator and help the Town Manager with his responsibilities and learn the job in order to plan for retirement.

Chairperson P. Burnham would like to invite IT to the June meeting so they can work on the website and then come back with draft site. Commission members discussed whether or not a mission statement exists and if it doesn't, they should work on creating one.

Commissioner Jeski asked the commission for feedback on the general structure of the proposed EDC website and with the work that has been identified as low to moderate effort and will be done to create initial content on the site.

Commissioner Marsh requested that he meet with IT to discuss current plan to find out what costs would be involved to create different styles of sites.

Commissioner Starr asked what the priority is of the commission for content on the site and Commissioner Marsh replied that definitely low effort items and a combination of moderate and high effort items and that the initiatives are an important component.

Chairperson P. Burnham stated that currently the town website has descriptions of tax abatement requirements. Commissioner Marsh found that other towns freely share information on what incentives are available. Commissioner Neary stated that the former EDC person shared state programs that are available. Chairperson P. Burnham agrees that it's a good idea to include such information and Commissioner Marsh believes that it would be beneficial for both existing and new businesses. Currently Chairperson P. Burnham hands out the Town Manager's business cards to many interested businesses.

Commissioner Kennedy asked if tax abatement info from the last 10 years could be put on the site and Commissioner Marsh replied that a summary of abatements would be more helpful. Commissioner Mitchell would like to see the identification of a fast track application process since it can be scary to go through the approval process. Commissioner Mitchell thinks highlighting success stories would also be a good idea. There is a service level agreement that includes a 90 day window from application to approval with service expectations. This information could be the catalyst for a business to start the process of expanding or locating to town.

Commissioner Marsh would like to focus on the long term in the 'Economic History/Trends/Conditions' section and believes that the 'South Windsor Economic Brochure' should include and information that could be discovered through a study conducted by a local university.

Chairperson P. Burnham would like the commission to be involved in EDC Coordinator hiring process in order to find the best fit for the commission.

Chairperson P. Burnham suggests that Commissioner Marsh talk to IT and then email the commission for advice/input/ideas. Commissioner Marsh would also like to set up a meeting with IT to facilitate the process.

Chairperson P. Burnham shared that the Town Manager would like to increase the EDC budget and is willing to spend money on the creation of a new website.

Commissioner Jodice asked if the site can be built by town IT and Commissioner Marsh indicated that it's possible but that there are limitations that need to be explored further. Commission commended Commissioner Marsh for all of the work put into the website presentation.

7. Committee Report

Discover South Windsor: The committee has not met recently.

8. New Business

Town Council liaison Carolyn Mirek shared information she found using Reference USA, a database available through the South Windsor Public Library with a current library card. She located 1,583 businesses and the information available includes the name of company, address, owner, # of employees, range of gross profits, credit rating, sex of owner, owner's/presidents name, size of business, phone #, type of business and more. She downloaded several lists from library and IT combined the lists. Chairperson P. Burnham asked for master copy for commission. Ms. Mirek stated that duplicates between lists still need to be

removed. Chairperson P. Burnham is surprised at the information he discovered when reviewing the draft list and he suggests that a survey could be created to target certain businesses. Survey Monkey could be used to distribute survey once the survey is created and Ms. Mirek indicated that she is not sure if emails are available through Reference USA. She will check and let the commission know.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if anyone knew what was happening on Brookfield Street. A berm was installed and on a windy day some trees were knocked onto Brookfield Street. The soil was blown, and since it was very soft soil from all of the trees having been grown there for so long, there wasn't anything to keep the trees in place. The Wapping Fair will be held at its current location. A suggestion was made to reach out to the Boy Scouts for an Eagle Scout project to plant trees on the berm.

9. Communications and Remarks

Report from Paul Burnham, Chairperson: Chairperson P. Burnham reported on the following:

- Visited Carla's Pasta-they are hoping to start construction soon which will be done in several phases for a total of 150,000 sq. ft. 9' of topsoil needs to be brought in. Currently they have cold storage offsite in Springfield, MA but the expansion will allow for onsite cold storage.
- Met with the Town Manager about the I-291 Tech Park infrastructure and the Town Manager has information he'd like to share with the commission at a future meeting
- The Town Manager will provide the name of a person to contact at the State Transportation Department to write a letter of support for the traffic light by Kennedy Road and Sullivan Avenue. Commissioner Mitchell believes that the town attorney should draft the letter
- A water filtration company, Evoqua Water Technologies, on Nutmeg Road South, is interested in locating water tanks outside in enclosures. Chairperson P. Burnham suggested that they contact Ms. Lipe. They have a 2nd location in Massachusetts but they are interested in bringing more people to South Windsor.
- Visited Oxford Performance Material (3-D printing), who had met with the Town Manager last week, and learned that they would like to increase their footprint in South Windsor. Chairperson P. Burnham is not sure of outcome of the meeting with the Town Manager but hopefully an application will be coming soon

10. General Discussion

Next Meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Madden Room.

Chairperson P. Burnham asked for a report on expansion dinner. Commissioner Neary reported that it was a nice event but that not as many people were in attendance as previous years. The president was the emcee and there were issues with the announcement of nominated and winning businesses. The expansion winners included one business which is not located in South Windsor. A suggestion was made that the process needs to be tweaked and that maybe

the commission could be a co-sponsor of the event in name only. Commissioner Neary stated that EDC members in attendance were announced.

Commissioner Mitchell attended the Chamber's After Hours at Farmington Bank and heard presentation about the risks of cyber security in both personal and business.

Commissioner Mitchell attended the successful Rotary Club auction which raised over \$165,000 to fund new pavilion in Veteran's Memorial Park which coincides with the war memorial. 540 people attended but the event was held outside of town since there isn't a location in town large enough to accommodate the attendance numbers. Discussion to host the event at The Rent in East Hartford took place.

Commissioner Marsh informed the commission that information on ransomware could be put on the EDC website to alert businesses about this and include steps to take if businesses become a victim. Commissioner Mitchell is trying to encourage the Chamber to bring awareness ransomware and Chairperson P. Burnham suggested maybe IT could do a presentation. Commissioner Marsh informed the commission that he sits on a committee that distributes information on this topic for work.

11. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Neary and seconded by Commissioner Jeski to adjourn at 9:20pm and was unanimously approved. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Potter
Clerk

Approved as corrected: May 25, 2016