

MINUTES

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

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2018
TIME: 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Susan Burnham, James Murray, Joseph Kennedy, Vice Chairperson Paul Burnham, Chairperson David Marsh, Louise Neary, Alternate John Mitchell (sat for William Jodice), Alternate Shawn Jacobaccio (sat for Shailesh Verma), Linda Jeski (arr. at 7:34pm)

ABSENT: William Jodice, Shailesh Verma, Edwina Futtner, Alternates Wayne Kilburn and Victor Dorobantu

ALSO PRESENT: Assistant Town Manager Scott Roberts, Town Manager Matt Galligan (via phone), and Mayor M. Saud Anwar

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Chairperson David Marsh called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.
2. **Roll Call:** The above-mentioned members were introduced.
3. **Presentation – Assistant Town Manager: Tax Abatement (Confidential):** Via telephone, Mr. Galligan gave a brief overview of the tax abatement applicant. The applicant is a Fortune 500 company, interested in expanding into South Windsor from their base in East Hartford. They would like to have their distribution center built in anticipation of the release of 6 new products. The product manufacturing will remain in East Hartford. Mr. Galligan has spoken with officials in both East Hartford and the State of CT and believes that it is a good deal for South Windsor. The addition of a company of this profile will help to promote the town on a national level. The project includes \$42 million in total costs and \$12.5 million for an automated system, for which no tax abatement is permitted. The applicant is requesting an abatement of 70% for 7 years. The distribution center will be constructed on the Higgins Farm on Ellington Road, for which the site is currently generating \$6,000 in taxes per year. The 1st year, \$470,000 in tax revenue will be generated. An additional \$367,000 in tax revenue for real fixtures is expected to be generated in the first year. Over a 10 year period, \$4.6 million in revenue will be generated from the project. In CT, 235 jobs will be saved, and an additional 30 or 40 jobs will be created. The applicant is currently working on resolving environmental issues and would like to take out building permits in November. The new product line up needs to be ready within the year. Free samples of the products were given out at a recent UCONN game to generate interest. The distribution center will be 270,000 sq. ft. On the nearby Milke property, there are plans to build 2 distribution centers on specifications due to the expected interest created by this applicant's project. The Hartford-Metro Alliance has gotten involved over concerns that the State of CT may impact the timeline of the project. Commissioner Neary asked what the timeframe is for the applicant to remain in South Windsor if a tax abatement is granted and Mr. Galligan responded that they need to remain here for 10 years although the town council may increase that number. The council is due to consider the abatement on November 5th. Commissioner Jacobaccio asked about the Scannell properties that are already built and the number of new staff they generated. Mr. Galligan responded that he believes that Mobis generated about 50, but that he is not sure about Vistar, maybe 30, which brings the additional jobs for all three projects to a minimum of 110. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham asked if the applicant will have room for expansion and Mr. Galligan replied that the applicant has made offers to adjacent property owners and plans to continue to buy property. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham asked if the project will be completed in phases and Mr. Galligan responded that the project being considered for tax abatement will be built and then the buildings across the street will be constructed.
A **motion** to approve the tax abatement of 70% over 7 years for a distribution center was made by Commissioner Mitchell and **seconded** by Commissioner Neary and was **unanimously approved. Motion passed.**

3. Public Participation: Elaine AbouAkar, South Windsor Chamber of Commerce President, introduced herself and explained that the Chamber is representing themselves at meetings and will bring back information to the Board of Directors.

Mayor Anwar thanked the Commission for approving the abatement. Mayor Anwar reminded Commissioners about the brief discussion at last month's meeting about EDC's representation during the search for a new town manager. An RFP was sent out to executive search firms and a few have been interviewed. SGR, Strategic Government Resources, has been selected and was unanimously approved by the Town Council. The firm is out of Texas and has a nationwide footprint, they are effective in marketing, and Mayor Anwar wants them to interact with commissions, community members and town staff before the recruiting process begins. Mayor Anwar is available to everyone who would like to share their thoughts. Commissioner Murray asked how Mr. Galligan came to be hired and Mayor Anwar replied that the Town Council conducted the search and interviews before the selection was made. Mayor Anwar stated that the fee structure for all the companies that responded are in the same ballpark, with a \$6,000 cap on interview costs, and if a selected candidate is unable to serve, no fee will be charged to find a replacement, with a \$24,000 cap. Chairperson Marsh and 5 other commission chairs were invited to a roundtable, held next week, to share their thoughts. Chairperson Marsh read the questions he's been asked to consider before attending the roundtable and would like commission members to respond to the same questions by submitting their responses before the meeting next week. Chairperson Marsh will send out the questions via email and request responses be returned prior to the meeting. Mayor Anwar stated that one challenge during the search is that once a wish list is identified it may be impossible for all items to be met and that the needs will have to be prioritized. Chairperson Marsh expressed that he is less concerned about the strength of their skills but more focused how they would meet any deficiency in their skills. Commissioner Murray believes that an applicant must have strong economic development skills. Commissioner Jacobaccio agrees with both Commissioner Murray and Chairperson Marsh's statements but stressed the need for strong economic development.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from Regular Meeting on 9/26/2018:

A **motion** to approve the minutes of September 26, 2018 was made by Commissioner Mitchell and **seconded** by Commissioner Jeski with the following corrections:

p.3. item 2.a. should read: "Vice Chairperson P. Burnham attended a meeting of the Redevelopment Agency in the past..."

p. 3 item 5.d. should read: "...the postcard wasn't eye catching enough to distinguish from junk mail..."

p. 4. item 6.b. should read "...expanding parking lot. Sidewalks are being built along Sullivan Avenue and Buckland Road on the west side."

p. 4 item 7 should read "...hosted a closing year-end event..." and "...that they have a consultant on an..."

Victor Dorobantu's name should be added to the list of those Commissioners that were present at the meeting.

The *motion was unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

5. Old Business

- (a) Economic Development Strategy: Chairperson Marsh asked Mayor Anwar if the Buxton Group will be attending a future commission meeting. Mayor Anwar did not have an update but stated that he needs to find out if there would be any associated costs, and if so, how they would be funded.

Mayor Anwar is still looking at how to retain Mr. Galligan to continue his work on economic development. Mr. Roberts met with the Buxton Group and believes that they would be a good firm to help profile the community, and that they will do a proposal for free. The profile will help the firm to better understand the community. They would then build a profile and run it through a database of retail companies with companies to target. This information would be given to an economic development person or the Commission and it would be up to the town to go out and market. Mr. Roberts could help set up the first meeting. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham stated that the activity sounds a lot like what CERC offered in their proposal but that it is a good idea for Buxton to come and make a presentation. Commissioner Jacobaccio asked if the town or the commission has a master development plan. Chairperson Marsh responded that the economic development strategy is summed in 2 line-items: define what the community is and its vision for the future and what investments are needed for infrastructure. Mayor Anwar believes that the town is in an area of opportunity-that the location sells itself, and can support office space, retail, and distribution centers but that there is a need for internal conversations. There are some aspects that need to be discussed with Planning and Zoning, such as the distance from fast food establishments to elementary school and child's home which has a direct link to the life-span of a child. Mayor Anwar believes that there are important conversations that need to occur, such as how to strengthen commissions and their roles. Currently, P&Z is in a position that requires them to accept applications that meet the stated requirements but that changes could be made in advance to steer development differently. Commissioner Jacobaccio asked if the EDC could bring proposals forward for discussion and Mayor Anwar replied that he would love for EDC to look at cerebral work and it creates an opportunity to look at what can be done. It may require a need for some outside help, but the information could educate the council. Commissioner Kennedy commented that Geissler's is an eyesore but an opportunity for exists. Chairperson Marsh doesn't see this commission as an executing body, governing from economic development perspective, but there is a need for someone to provide support to define vision, etc.... Mayor Anwar replied that each commission has a staff person that assists them in their work, and that it would be worthwhile to have someone, such as Mr. Roberts to assist. Commissioner Marsh believes that the strategic planning meeting was a good first step. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham asked how the Architectural Review Board receives applications since there seem to be more projects that are being approved, but not many go in front of the review board. Mr. Roberts responded that it depends on which zone a project is located but that he can check with Michele Lipe. Chairperson Marsh commented that maybe all construction needs to be reviewed to create more consistency. Mayor Anwar stated that economic development has not been selective and the requirements for remaining land in town need to be reviewed. Mayor Anwar suggested inviting representatives from other boards to open discussions. Commissioner Mitchell commented that this is a desirable town to move to but there is a need to manage the aesthetics. Commissioner Jacobaccio asked if there is a 'South Windsor first' policy and Commissioner Mitchell replied that this has been promoted through the Chamber in the past. Mr. Roberts replied that there is a local bid preference but giving preference to in-town businesses can make it difficult for South Windsor businesses to do work in other towns. If an in-town business comes within a close percentage for a bid, there is preference for local business. Chairperson Marsh stated that the town needs to commit to ensuring that businesses remain in South Windsor. Mr. Roberts suggests interviewing businesses to find out what they need to remain viable and bring businesses that compliment and support them to town and to help businesses reduce their costs. Mayor Anwar is hoping that the Chamber can play a larger role in assessing the needs of businesses to identify needs and opportunities to create collaboration. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham stated that he reached out to businesses that he had made initial contact with since 2015 and Mr. Roberts commented that a personal level of service will benefit the town and attract businesses.

- (b) Economic Development Commission Brand, Identity, Administration: Discussed under prior item.
- (c) Sustainable CT: Chairperson Marsh didn't attend the recent meeting, but Mr. Roberts shared that South Windsor attained Bronze and is on its way to earning Silver.
- (d) South Windsor Citizen Survey: Mr. Roberts stated that Ashley is compiling the responses and that duplicate response codes have been removed so that only the last response is being captured and analyzed. He can ask Ashley for timeframe for completion. Mayor Anwar will ask Buxton to come for a meeting and will include the town council in an invitation to attend.
- (e) Town Ordinance Economic Impact Analysis: Chairperson Marsh had no update. This item will be tabled until a new manager has been hired. Chairperson Marsh received a data dump of the information discovered. He also reached out to Conn College to find out about an intern (Conn College pays) and is waiting to hear from them.
- (f) Mayor.tv: Chairperson Marsh had no update and will ask to have this item removed from future agendas. The videos are now online and viewable through the town's website.

6. Committee Report(s)

(a) Bylaw Review Committee: Vice Chairperson P. Burnham met with Commissioners S. Burnham and Jeski to discuss the changes to the bylaws. Elections are held in November now so moving them to January allows for time for new members to be appointed by the town council. Commissioners discussed the proposed changes and debated how many meetings it is acceptable to miss. Commissioner Jeski asked Mayor Anwar if amendments to the bylaws require an approval by the town council and he indicated that it would. The changes would need to be presented to the town council, a public hearing held, and then vote could be taken on the ordinance. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham will forward the new bylaws to the town manager once the commission approves them. The bylaws need to be reviewed to make sure they conform to the charter. Mayor Anwar stated that if the changes to the bylaws are just so that they are brought into conformity the process may be different. Chairperson Marsh suggested that they be given to the town attorney. Mr. Roberts offered to provide technology, such as Conference Bridge, to allow alternates to attend meetings virtually. Mayor Anwar suggested that for members who may spend extended amounts of time out of the state, the bylaws could include language that permit dial-in attendance. Commissioner S. Burnham asked who would reach out to someone who is consistently not attending meetings and Chairperson Marsh stated that he would discuss it with Vice Chairperson P. Burnham and together they would decide what to do.

(b) Business Community Engagement (Ambassador Program) / Committee: Vice Chairperson P. Burnham shared the following updates:

- Duff Grinding has acquired Hermann Schmidt and will be consolidating into one building on Sea Pave Road.
- Aero-med/Cardinal Health is considering a relocation to NY which could result in the loss of 30 jobs. He has reached out to their corporate headquarters and will be forwarding information to the town manager.
- Unitex interested in constructing a new building in the area. They are now servicing most MA hospitals and need more space. He has reached out to them about building in town.
- Spoke to David Kostyk, Esteem Manufacturing, today and learned that they have signed a 2-year lease on a 3,000 sq. ft. building with plans to expand and possibly buy the building.
- Atlantic Plywood was purchased by Parksite but will continue to operate as 2 companies. He will follow up with them.
- Cumberland Farms has filed an application for a convenience store/gas pumps on Rte. 5.

- Pride Gas has received approval to build a new store/pumps on Rte. 5.
- Electro Methods has begun their expansion on Nutmeg Road North.
- Former Aero Gas building is up for sale.
- Fuel cell project next to Maztek is moving forward and expects to be up and running by January 2019.
- Musante Motorsports bought a building on Commerce Way and have received approval to expand in the back.

7. New Business

2019 Meeting Schedule: Chairperson Marsh reminded commissioners that the calendar was sent out in the agenda packet.

8. Communications and Remarks

(a) Report from David Marsh, Chairperson: Chairperson Marsh relayed concerns about the South Windsor Walk and Wheel Ways project that is part of an Eversource trail. The project was passed earlier in October and concerned neighbors want to know what the map looks like and the socioeconomic impact to placing a trail so close to residential properties. Mayor Anwar explained that Eversource cleared under the power lines to gain access for maintenance. The cost to the town to create the walking paths was not much due to a grant and it increases access by connecting to trails. Chairperson Marsh asked if the impact to neighbors was considered. There are people riding and walking very close to residential properties. Mayor Anwar walked the trails himself and believes it is not easy for bikes and there should be no motorized vehicles. Chairperson Marsh has observed that many segments along the corridors have swamplands and Mayor Anwar explained that planks are placed over some of the areas and will allow for people to walk them. Chairperson Marsh asked if there will be any permanent modifications and Mayor Anwar clarified if the concern is the reduction of privacy and home values for the homeowners. Mayor Anwar will research these concerns and reiterated that they were intended to connect to existing trails but if they are too close the concerns need to be addressed. The group of homeowners is interested in collaborating, but Chairperson Marsh feels that the Town could be more proactive and that if they've done their due diligence it will not have a negative impact. Mayor Anwar will reach out to the Walk and Wheelways Committee.

9. General Discussion

Next Meeting is scheduled for November 28, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. in the Madden Room.

10. Adjournment

A **motion** to adjourn at 9:30pm was made by Commissioner Mitchell and **seconded** by Commissioner Murray and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Potter
Clerk

Approved with corrections: November 28, 2018