

MINUTES

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

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2020
TIME: 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chairperson David Marsh, Vice Chairperson Paul Burnham, Susan Burnham, Linda Jeski, Joseph Kennedy, Alternate Mindy Lewis sat for Louise Neary, William Jodice, James Murray (arr. 7:06pm)

ABSENT: Edwina Futtner, Louise Neary, Scott Kelley, Alternates Victor Dorobantu, Wayne Kilburn and Shailesh Verma

ALSO PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Liz Pendleton, Assistant Town Manager Scott Roberts

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chairperson David Marsh called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. Roll Call: The above-mentioned members were introduced. Alternate Shawn Jacobaccio has resigned and the members were introduced to Alternate Mindy Lewis.

3. Public Participation: Assistant Town Manager Scott Roberts passed out a packet that was shared at the International Council of Shopping Centers held in NYC. Mr. Roberts attended the event in December. As he walked through the complex, he was amazed at the number of developers that were in attendance and spoke at length with about 12 that had good fits for Evergreen Walk. One such developer offered a different type of dining experience known as a "food haul" that features guest celebrity chefs who offer a unique menu of the day, mostly small plate style. The closest one is in TN although Commissioner Lewis thinks there might be one coming to Hartford. The idea is that the same menu would be offered during a certain period of time before it's changed. Mr. Roberts tried various menu items and found it was excellent, and believes it could be a draw for Evergreen Walk, During discussions about a new EDC website, Commissioner Dorobantu shared a document he created with information about the town that would be of interest to developers. The top sheet of the packet was created using the information that Commissioner Dorobantu had previously presented in a document that he created. The remainder of the packet showcases projects that have been completed or are underway. Mr. Roberts will be meeting with Senator Anwar will report back to the commission on its outcome.

The town is in the process of requesting an increase to its bond rating from S&P to AAA. Commissioner S. Burnham asked what the increase will mean and Mr. Roberts explained that it will help with the interest rate the town receives out on open market to sell bonds. It's the town's credit rating and AAA is highest a town can receive. The information in the packet was used to request the increase in the bond rating.

Mr. Roberts reported that Coca-Cola is completed and that he visited and observed their process. Commissioner Murray asked if their trucks are registered in town and Mr. Roberts believes they are since they are part of the personal property. Commissioner P. Burnham asked when the Learning Experience break ground and Mr. Roberts replied that the

preconstruction meeting has not yet taken place. The daycare center will be built at Evergreen Walk next to the hotel and in front of the apartments. Commissioner Kennedy asked about the new Windsor Federal and Commissioner P. Burnham stated that they are interested in constructing a building on Buckland Road and Mr. Roberts added that he will try to get more information for the next meeting. Mr. Roberts stated that he has no new information on the Pride or Cumberland Farms projects and Commissioner P. Burnham commented that an application was filed but now progress has slowed and there are not a lot of gas stations in town. Mr. Roberts encouraged people to work with Michele Lipe to develop a plan that would be a good fit or advocate for changes to zoning that would allow for more gas stations. Deputy Mayor Liz Pendleton mentioned that Ms. Lipe had proposed a design for a town center that was more "Old New England" but then Hartford Hospital was able to build their new location with a more modern design. Commissioner P. Burnham explained that the utilities were supposed to be installed underground and that Hartford Hospital was going to build a more historic looking building but changes in management at hospital equated to changes in the project. Chairperson Marsh stated that other towns set ordinances so that things cannot be put where or how it shouldn't be. Deputy Mayor Pendleton asked the commission to work with Town Manager Maniscalco or Mr. Roberts if there is concern about a certain area. Commissioner P. Burnham stated that if there are designated zones it can help with acceptable development and that the town needed to look at creating zones such as 'Town Center' to help with that.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from Regular Meeting on 11/20/2019:

A **motion** to approve the minutes of November 20, 2019 was made by Commissioner Jeski and **seconded** by Commissioner Jodice with the following corrections:

Item 8. 5th bullet Should read "...resistance to the project by P&Z and that..." and "...amendment or the project itself so Commissioner Kelley will find out."

Commissioners Jeski, Jodice, Murray and Kennedy voted in favor. Commissioners P. Burnham, S. Burnham, Lewis and Chairperson Marsh abstain. *Due to a lack of majority vote, the time is tabled until the February meeting.*

5. Old Business

(a) Economic Development Strategy: None.

(b) Economic Development Commission Brand, Identity, Administration: None.

(c) Sustainable CT: None.

(d) Town Ordinance Economic Impact Analysis: None.

(e) Follow-up Discussion on Tax Abatements: Commissioner P. Burnham explained that in May 2019, then Town Manager Galligan had asked the commission to give input to help determine what would work best for tax abatements. The changes to the abatement process haven't happened yet and the commission would like to restart the conversations. Deputy Mayor Pendleton asked where she could find this information and Commissioner Jeski explained that it can be found in the May 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Jeski shared her copy of the minutes. Commissioner P. Burnham stated that it was brought to his attention that a property that was recently purchased had an abatement with requirements that weren't in compliance and that the abatement process was different when it had come before the

EDC. The commission is trying to reestablish the abatement process to make sure everything is in black and white which is why the opportunity for an executive session is now in the agenda so that projects can be brought before the commission prior to an abatement application approval. Deputy Mayor Pendleton encouraged the commission to work with Town Manager Maniscalco and commented that they are on a great track to come up with parameters and not to be afraid to come up with new ideas and present them to the Town Manager. Commissioner P. Burnham state that it is good that Mr. Roberts is attending meetings and sharing updates on a regular basis. Commissioner Jeski shared some experiences she's had as a Board of Assessment Appeals member and the information that she knew as an EDC member as it relates to tax abatements. Deputy Mayor Pendleton suggests asking for a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss the suggestions that came as a result of the brainstorming session and informed the commission that there's a state statute that covers abatements which includes guidelines with parameters. Commissioner Murray asked what happens if a company leaves "How does the town get their money back?" and Deputy Mayor Pendleton responded that the liability becomes a tax bill which is enforceable and must be settled.

6. Committee Report(s)

(a) Business Community Engagement (Ambassador Program) / Committee:

Commissioner P. Burnham heard that Macy's is keeping their jobs in town but wondered why the commission wasn't informed of their decision. Chairperson Marsh suggested setting up the town email to distribute information and Mr. Roberts agreed that the commission could then decide what information they want to be shared. Commissioner P. Burnham then shared the following updates:

- 571 Nutmeg Road North has been purchased by Satellite Tool to expand operations
- Plasma Technology has purchased a building on Nutmeg Road North for an expansion
- R&L Carriers has purchased the building formerly occupied by CT Monument for an expansion
- 1239 & 1249 John Fitch Blvd is under contract to be purchased
- Costco was approved by IWWA although there is a fire safety concern that may have some challenges and is being evaluated by the Fire Marshal's office
- Metro Realty came before P&Z so he will reach out to see if they'll come to an EDC meeting to share their plans

A member of the public, a Chamber of Commerce member, has started writing an article that goes to members once a month. She shared that this is her second EDC meeting but she feels that there is a missing piece concerning projects that have rumors about them, such as Home Depot and whether it is the distribution center that has been referenced in P&Z minutes.

Commissioner P. Burnham keeps in contact with realtors and asks questions about particular buildings. The information they share is public record-such as when they've sold but the Chamber could be letting people know when new businesses are in town and when they'll be hiring so that local people can be hired. Mr. Roberts stated that he is not sure the town would be involved in the hiring process but could share when a CO has been obtained. Mr. Roberts also suggested that the Town Manager might be able to share a report at Chamber board meetings.

7. New Business

(a) Election of Officers: Commissioner Jeski expressed thanks to Chairperson Marsh on behalf of the commission for serving as Chair of the EDC for the past 2 years.

A **motion** for the nomination of Paul Burnham as Chair was made by Commissioner S. Burnham and **seconded** by Commissioner Kennedy and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

A **motion** for the nomination of David Marsh for Vice Chairperson was made by Commissioner P. Burnham and **seconded** by Commissioner S. Burnham and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

A **motion** for the nomination of Susan Burnham as Secretary was made by Commissioner P. Burnham and **seconded** by Commissioner Kennedy and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Chairperson P. Burnham thanked Vice Chairperson Marsh for his 2 years of service and stated that he is hoping to continue to move forward.

8. Communications and Remarks

(a) Report from David Marsh, Chairperson: Chairperson P. Burnham plans to talk to the Town Manager about having CGI back in town to do a new video- possibly with the new material that was included in the booklet.

Chairperson P. Burnham reminded commissioners that in the near future, meetings will be videotaped upstairs in Town Council chambers, and he would like to see if the technology can be brought downstairs. He believes the commission works well together in close proximity. Mr. Roberts is submitting for a state grant to see if the equipment can be put into the Madden Room as a second live studio space. He's hoping to get the grant to bring in about \$45,000 of equipment. Deputy Mayor Pendleton shared that according to the preliminary schedule, EDC would go live in March in Town Council chambers. Commissioner Kennedy asked about whether P&Z would have to comply since they weren't happy about being recorded and Mr. Roberts replied that P&Z comes under town council's purview and will be required to be recorded.

Commissioner Jeski commented that there is no place to direct people on the website to find out the correct information to topics such as the text amendment application and that a video recording will help. Mr. Roberts also stated that a new website will have a more clear landing zone with information on agendas and minutes and forums for public comment that staff liaisons will chair with appropriate commissions and boards. A news box would include last 5 news items which could also show letters of support for applications.

9. General Discussion

10. Executive Session

11. Adjournment

A **motion** to adjourn at 8:31pm was made by Commissioner S. Burnham and **seconded** by Commissioner Jeski and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Next meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Madden Room.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Catherine Potter
Clerk**

Approved with corrections: February 26, 2020