

MINUTES

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
VIRTUAL ON-LINE MEETING
SOUTH WINDSOR TOWN HALL**

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, September 23, 2020
TIME: 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Chairperson Paul Burnham, Linda Jeski, Bill Jodice, Louise Neary, Mindy Lewis (sat for James Murray), Victor Dorobantu (sat for David Marsh), Susan Burnham (arr. 7:15pm),

ABSENT: Vice Chairperson David Marsh, James Murray, Joseph Kennedy, Edwina Futtner, Scott Kelley, Alternates Wayne Kilburn and Shailesh Verma

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Mike Maniscalco, Assistant Town Manager Scott Roberts, Mayor and Town Council liaison Andrew Paterna, and EDC Consultant Matthew Galligan

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chairperson P. Burnham called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

2. Roll Call: The above-mentioned members were introduced.

3. Potential Businesses Coming to South Windsor – Scott Roberts: Mr. Roberts met with Engineering and Planning departments today about all current and upcoming projects. The following projects were discussed:

- 240 Ellington Road-Scannell Properties-under construction
- Geissler's Development – no new development; Call with Developer – Reviewing Budget and Operating Pro Forma
- Costco – public hearing scheduled for October 13th
- The Gateway Buckland East – approval granted for Phase 2; unknown start date.
- Aldi's – Pre Construction meeting held with Aldi's last week; spring occupancy proposed
- Chase Bank – Finishing construction; fall occupancy expected
- HarborChase of Evergreen Walk – under construction; early 2021 occupancy expected
- Evergreen Crossings – Opened October 1st
- Hotel – Evergreen – finishing construction; unknown occupancy target date
- Daycare – Evergreen – under construction; spring occupancy
- Windsor Federal – pre construction meeting to be held today
- Barry Equipment – pending with PZC; probably November public hearing
- Kubota Dealer – Rt 5 – completing construction; expect CO request soon

New projects:

- Square Peg Pizza – Storefront/Commissary – Glastonbury
- Valvoline is proposed on the Mr. Sparkle site along with a small addition to the car wash
- Pete's Tire Barn - 12,000 storage facility at 260 Chapel Road

Commissioner Jeski asked if there is a way to get a report of the projects so that all of the members can get all of the information. Mr. Roberts will send it out. Commissioner Dorobantu stated that Square Peg Pizza is looking for a space to open up a restaurant, hopefully in the gateway district. They already have a deal with a commissary kitchen opening next to Carla's Pasta.

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from Regular Meeting on 6/24/2020: A **motion** to approve the minutes of June 24, 2020 with the following corrections was made by Commissioner Neary and **seconded** by Commissioner Jeski and was ***approved unanimously. Motion passed.***

p.3 6. Old Business (d) Mayor TV: should read "...guide would be free to businesses."

p. 1 3. Presentations (a) Metro Realty: should read "...M&R Liquors. At the front..." and p.1 10th "...would be positioned to the north but they have not done a lot of retail in the past but the site has a good location and good visibility. The current health crisis makes retail challenging. smaller retail sites are in demand and they are hoping to break ground in the spring."

p.2 3. Presentations (c) Costco: should read "...Commissioner Jeski expressed..."

Minutes from Special Meeting on 7/1/2020: A **motion** to approve the minutes of July 1, 2020 was made by Commissioner Jeski and was **seconded** by Commissioner Neary and was ***unanimously approved. Motion passed.***

5. Old Business

(a) Economic Development Strategy: Town Manager Mike Maniscalco suggested that the commission begin to think about a plan as businesses come forward looking for tax abatements. He would like to develop a more granular tax abatement program to provide more guidance to staff and applicants.

(b) Economic Development Commission Brand, Identity, Administration: none

(c) Town Ordinance Economic Impact Analysis: none

(d) Mayor TV: *Update on Contract – signed ?*: Chairperson P. Burnham stated that the town manager has signed the contract and they are waiting to hear back from Mayor TV in the next couple of weeks. At that time, there will be a meeting with the town manager to determine what to do and to develop a schedule for filming. Chairperson P. Burnham should have an update by October's meeting.

(e) Follow-up Discussion on Tax Abatements: Assistant Town Manager Scott Robers worked with different departments to find out how the abatement process gets started when businesses come to town. He then created a flow diagram to illustrate how applications move through the process from application to approval. He will send out the flow diagram to commissioners so that once everyone knows the flow, discussions can move forward on making changes. Commissioner Jeski commented that she looks forward to seeing the flow diagram and stated that questions/suggestions had been submitted. She asked if meetings will take place for the EDC to provide continued input. Mr. Roberts replied that the commission will also have an opportunity to see the abatement application and that some questions may be answered by viewing all of the current documentation.

6. Committee Report(s): None

7. New Business: None

8. Communications and Remarks

(a) Report from Paul Burnham, Chairperson: Chairperson P. Burnham stated that he has been watching applications that are coming before P&Z. He shared that a company like Twin Manufacturing wants to expand but with layoffs at Pratt & Whitney, they may need an incentive to move forward with the project instead of waiting a year.

(b) Matthew Galliigan, Economic Development Consultant: Mr. Galliigan stated that retail projects are moving forward and that Buxton Group is a good match. He will be meeting next week to sit with P&Z and POG to look at the zoning regulations and restrictions to

start thinking differently. COVID is going to change the economic impact of communities. Mr. Galligan had a meeting with Geislars and shared information from Buxton on what businesses would be good for their project. The Scannell property project is under construction. The town put out an RFP request and worked with staff to turn it around within a short time period. The town had a few issues with the Costco application and thanked EDC for their help and support. They are now having an issue with CT water and he is hoping to speak with them again next week to discuss a traffic design issue. Mr. Galligan does weekly calls to stay connected. At 1 Buckland Road, the gateway to South Windsor, he will put in his support at public hearing and remind P&Z that because of some flexibility in land ownership Evergreen Walk was able to come to town. He commented that the town's incentive program will have to become more aggressive as COVID goes away, economic development will blossom and businesses will want to move quickly to do their projects. The town management team is working well together, people want to be in town, and construction is still moving forward. The town may want to consider working with the town attorney to determine if there are other programs the town can do to support businesses. Commissioner S. Burnham asked if there is a date for the Geissler's project and Mr. Galligan replied that they are probably 2 weeks from providing financial information. He explained that costs have increased since their initial presentation and they will need more concrete information before information goes public.

Chairperson P. Burnham stated that he would like to see unoccupied buildings be filled. Mr. Galligan replied that some issues are that buildings are existing so significant improvements need to be made for them to qualify for incentives. Mr. Maniscalco stated that some businesses might be trying to play South Windsor against other towns with areas that have incentives due to blight or enterprise zones. He countered that South Windsor offers safety and quality of life that those other towns cannot.

- (c) Tentative – Michael Maniscalco, Town Manager: Mr. Maniscalco shared that last night P&Z reviewed 1 Buckland Road's proposal for a left hand turn coming from Manchester. Lack of accessibility from this direction has been a deterrent to filling up space in the building. Mr. Maniscalco spoke in favor of it especially since he doesn't want to show an empty plaza when you are coming into town. SWPD has reviewed it and is supportive of the change stating that it is safe. Chairperson P. Burnham asked if a letter of support would be called for and Mr. Maniscalco confirmed that it is since this change is important for our community. Commissioner Jeski asked if a traffic study was done and Mr. Maniscalco replied that it was and that any issues could be solved by putting in a light. Mayor Paterna highlighted that EDC's support for the Costco project made a difference in the approval by P&Z,

A **motion** to send a letter of support for the left-hand turn into 1 Buckland Road was made by Commissioner Jeski and **seconded** by Commissioner Neary and was ***unanimously approved. Motion passed.***

Mr. Maniscalco announced that South Windsor has been named the 12th best community to live in according to Money Magazine. The only other CT town named was Cheshire. Mr. Maniscalco stated that even with the coronavirus, economic development has held and the tax collection rate has remained steady. The unemployment rate is lower than other areas and a long-term recovery committee has been formed. The area is starting to see infection rates creep up a bit, but South Windsor is taking the virus seriously, and the town is managing to survive very well and even flourish in some ways.

Mr. Maniscalco attended the IMCA conference, virtually, and one thing he learned was that those cities that took the virus of 1918 seriously, were able to survive.

9. General Discussion: None

10. Executive Session

11. Adjournment

A **motion** to adjourn at 7:55pm was made by Commissioner Neary and **seconded** by Commissioner Jeski and ***unanimously approved. Motion passed.***

Next meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved: October 28, 2020