

MEETING MINUTES

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

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, July 26, 2023
TIME: 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Vice Chairperson Paul Burnham, Linda Jeski, Joseph Kennedy, James Murray, Louise Neary, Daniel Kane, William Jodice, Alternate Victor Dorobantu (sat for Commissioner Sue Burnham), Alternate Mindy Lewis (sat for Chairperson David Marsh), Alternate James Mitchell (arr. at 7:10pm, sat for Commissioner Kelley), Customer Service Clerk Sofia Kopp

ABSENT: Chairperson David Marsh, Commissioner Sue Burnham, Scott Kelley, Alternate Michael Buganski, Council Liaison Deputy Mayor Steven King, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Michael Maniscalco as the Town Liaison

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Vice Chairperson Paul Burnham called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
2. **Roll Call:** The above-mentioned members were introduced.
3. **Public participation:** None
4. **Special Presentation:**

Don Cusson from Cusson Automotive - *Expansion*

Don Cusson, President of Cusson Automotive located at 29 Mascolo Road, presented his application for a tax abatement to help during a time of transition as the business finds themselves in the process of expansion with purchasing 753 John Fitch Boulevard. Cusson mentioned that the property is adjacent to his location at 29 Mascolo Road and the multiple hurdles he has had to overcome such as zoning changes. Cusson had a design drawn up for the 12,000 square foot building that has the approval of the town boards and even provided a visual for the commission to view during his presentation. There is no set price for the construction however, the projected cost exceeds \$1.0 Million with the property being \$600,000 and the current upfront costs exceeding \$100,000. Additional costs would include equipment such as lifts, etc. After Cusson's presentation, the commission was asked if there were any questions. Such questions were as followed:

- Is this property connected to the existing building?

This building is behind the current building, which leaves plenty of room for parking as well as future expandability.

- What is the cost of the new building?

The cost exceeds \$1.0 Million and Cusson will have a more exact number come September.

- Are you looking for a 3 or 5 year abatement?

Cusson expressed interest in a 5 year abatement, however it was said by Vice Chairperson P. Burnham that the request would first go to the Town Manager, then to the Economic Development Commission, then to the Town Council who ultimately decides how many years Cusson would receive.

5. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from Regular Meeting on 6/28/23: A **motion** was made by Commissioner Dorobantu and **seconded** by Commissioner Kennedy with the following corrections:

Bottom of Page 2 Correction: Discussed to change the sentence from "Mr. Rappaport discussed the time frame will consist of a year of site work and a year of building they do not legally phase it" to "Mr. Rappaport discussed the time frame will consist of a year of site work and a year of building they do not legally have to phase it in."

Motion approved by majority. Chairperson Linda Jeski, Commissioner Daniel Kane abstain. ***Motion passed.***

6. Old Business: None

7. Committee Report(s):

- *Strategic Planning Committee*- Committee is done and the plan has been approved and passed. Final meeting was to go over minutes and invoices.
- *Quad Board Sub-Committee*- Have not met

8. New Business:

Election of Officers: Leadership Transition- Commissioner Jeski to assume role as Chairperson.
Appointment of Secretary to fill vacancy by Commissioner Jeski

A. Leadership Transition-Commissioner Jeski to assume role as Chairperson:

Motion to Nominate Linda Jeski as Chairperson of the Economic Development Commission was made by: Commissioner Neary
Motion Seconded by: Commissioner Murray
Motion Passes by unanimous voice vote

B. Appointment of Secretary to fill vacancy by Commissioner Jeski:

Motion to Nominate Joseph Kennedy as Secretary of the Economic Development Commission was made by: Commissioner Jeski
Motion Seconded by: Commissioner Neary
Motion Passes by unanimous voice vote

9. Economic Development Opportunities/Updates:

Vice Chairperson Paul Burnham reported on the following:

- There was a ribbon cutting at The Goddard School at Evergreen Walk. The Economic Development commission was represented by Vice Chairperson P. Burnham and Commissioner Victor Dorobantu
- Boars Head as well as Wild Fork Foods are renting freezer space in the former Waybest Foods location
- Oscar's All American Grill is now open on Sullivan Ave in the former Joe's Pizza location
- Club Fitness may be going in where LA Fitness was, more details to follow
- The Economic Development Chamber Survey has gone out to area businesses regarding a business showcase potentially with the farmer's market next June. The survey so far has come back 50/50 for an inside vs. outside venue. More details to follow in the next Economic Development meeting in September
- The Assistant Planner/Economic Development Coordinator position has been reposted.
- Currently there are a 3 food places coming through the Planning and Zoning Department to soon be located next to People's Bank. A few of the names floating about are Starbucks, Raising Cane's, and the Town Manager Michael Maniscalco specified the last location as being Chipotle

After these points were said, there was discussion if the property owned by Metro Realty by Aldi's and Chase Bank was approved which then was answered by Vice Chairperson P. Burnham that it had been approved for a while.

Town Manager Maniscalco then went over a few updates:

- The old bank building sold and a school for people with Autism has opened in its place as well as the third floor being rented out for individual therapists
- Town Manager Maniscalco had a meeting with Charter Realty the previous week to discuss Evergreen Walk and there was a list of business that are currently committed to being built such as Lens Crafters, Sunglass Hut, Kung Fu Tea, as well as a virtual golf lounge in the previous Brooks Brothers location. There is green space behind Evergreen that will be converted to a patio space for public use
- Whole Foods exterior is now completed and they are slated to open Q1
- There is currently 10,000sq feet of available space next to Whole Foods
- Town Manager Maniscalco has been in contact with Washington Prime, who are the owners of the 50-70 acre property behind Joanne Fabrics. Conversations have been had as to what to use the property for however, no idea has been cemented

Commissioner Dorobantu mentioned businesses, such as the new IV lounge and the Hartford Baking Company, that he has helped to bring to town by introducing them to the proper people. Dorobantu had been conversing with an Indian Restaurant that ultimately went to Rocky Hill. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham mentioned his family having gone to the Parkville Market and Commissioner Dorobantu mentioned that idea being a good fit for Evergreen Walk.

10. General Discussion:

Chairperson Jeski has been present at the last two Planning and Zoning Meetings and brought up zoning changes with two properties by 240 Deming St. Metro Realty would like to put in 75 affordable housing units, however would need a zone change for the properties in order to proceed since the two properties are currently a gateway zone and an AA-30. Chairperson Jeski mentioned the opposition she saw from members of the community during the Planning and Zoning meetings. The main issue being the location of the housing, not the idea of the affordable housing itself.

Town Manager Maniscalco mentioned that there had been a traffic study conducted and the results showed there would be less cars if a housing complex was put there over a commercial business. He also discussed that our affordable housing moratorium, that was put in place in 2019, was coming to an end. Explained the concept of the moratorium as well as the fact Planning and Zoning was trying to implement

more affordable housing units in future construction plans to help us achieve a moratorium again.

11. Executive Session: None

12. Adjournment:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Neary and **seconded** by Commissioner Jodice to adjourn at 7:58pm and was ***unanimously approved. Motion passed.***

No meeting will be held in August

Respectfully submitted,

Sofia Kopp
Customer Service Clerk