

MINUTES

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

**SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, December 21, 2016
TIME: 7:30 P.M.**

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

ABSENT: Edwina Futtner and Cindy Beaulieu

ALSO PRESENT: Matthew Galligan, Town Manager and Carolyn Mirek, Deputy Mayor and Town Council Liaison

- 1. Call Meeting to Order:** Chairperson P. Burnham called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m.
- 2. Roll Call:** The above-mentioned members were introduced.
- 3. Guest –** Matthew Galligan, Town Manager
 - a. Presentation of three tax abatement proposals:

Geissler's Supermarket: This abatement is for an expansion of Geissler's Supermarket at 965 Sullivan Ave. The improvements to the existing building will help to draw other businesses to the area and provide more sq. footage for the store since they will be taking over space previously occupied by a liquor store. The 5-year abatement is for \$39,305. Commissioner Starr suggested implementing a façade improvement program. Mr. Galligan stated that a revolving loan fund could be used for this type of program in the future. The bank located in the same plaza would like to reposition itself to allow for better traffic flow, a drive-thru tellers and exterior access to an ATM. Commissioner Starr asked Mr. Galligan for clarification of the difference between the Redevelopment Agency and the Economic Development. Mr. Galligan explained that they focus on specific properties and areas not the entire town and that they are currently earmarked to work on the I-291 corridor. The Agency's meeting minutes are available online but are not up to date since they need to be approved by the Agency and they haven't needed to meet recently.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Kilburn and **seconded** by Commissioner Jeski to approve the abatement for Geissler's Supermarket of 50% over five years valued at \$7,861.00 and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Commercial Store Fronts: This abatement is for a two-phase improvement to Commercial Store Fronts located at 470 Governor's Highway. The first phase is for equipment storage and the second phase is an addition. These improvements would make the building into a usable space. The company provides glass for secure areas of a building windows such as banks and schools and they currently employ 30 employees.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Murray and **seconded** by Commissioner Jodice to approve the abatement for the first phase of improvements for Commercial Store Fronts of 50% over three years valued at \$2,340.00 and was *approved by majority. Motion passed. Commissioner Jeski recused herself and abstained from voting.*

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Murray and **seconded** by Commissioner Jodice to approve the abatement for the second phase of improvements for Commercial Store Fronts of 50% over three years valued at \$5,228.00 and was *approved by majority. Motion passed. Commissioner Jeski recused herself and abstained from voting.*

John Fitch Distilling Co.: This abatement is for improvements for John Fitch Distilling Company located at 51 Glendale Road. The company will be producing patented gin (to be called Steamboat Gin) and bourbon within a newly constructed log cabin-like building that meets both federal and health regulations overlooking a brook in the rear of the property.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jeski and **seconded** by Commissioner Neary to approve the abatement of 50% over five years valued at \$9,475.00 and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

b. EDC Updates: Mr. Galligan provided the following updates.

- dck, a world-wide developer, along the I-291 corridor is still working to complete the studio project.
- The Redevelopment Agency submitted applications to the Mohegan and Mashantucket tribes to consider South Windsor as a possible third casino location. An announcement will be made next week for a meeting. The police department has been asked by Mr. Galligan to investigate the impact to the community from casinos pertaining to crime and other factors. Mr. Galligan also asked the tax assessor to research financial impacts to property values in communities with casinos. The town will not be offering any incentives for the town to be chosen as the casino site. The project will have to go before the State legislature if South Windsor is selected. It is estimated that for every \$100 million dollars spent, \$2.6 million will come back to the community. The casino cannot be a high-rise like in Uncasville, but the project would include restaurants and retail along with gaming. A lot of money would have to be spent on the property to address issues including highway access and the location of existing power lines. A presentation will be made the community by the casino to provide more information. Increased revenue as a result of the casino would allow for a reduction in the mill rate. Mr. Galligan is encouraging residents to consider the opportunity to see what the casino project has to offer and before a decision is made. If the project goes to other towns, such as East Windsor, the casino traffic would pass through South Windsor and there would be no benefit to the town. If the project comes to South Windsor, there would be revenues to enable a reduction in the mill rate. If two communities are selected as possible sites, the State could call for a referendum to decide. The Redevelopment Agency has an obligation to honor its agreement with dck, which requires that the casino project be explored. Otherwise litigation could be brought forth.

- Currently, Eversource is not doing any fuel cell projects due to cost. Money was recently given to alternative energy companies to improve their facilities but these same companies were not selected for contracts by the State.
- Permits have been pulled for the hotel next to the apartments. The project is moving forward.
- The hotel project on the east side is currently negotiating with their bank.

4. Adjournment

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Neary and **seconded** by Commissioner Murray to adjourn at 8:25p.m. and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Potter
Clerk

Approved: February 22, 2017