

MINUTES

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

**SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019
TIME: 7:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Joseph Kennedy, Edwina Futtner, James Murray, Alternate John Mitchell (sat for Louise), Susan Burnham, Alternate Wayne Kilburn, Linda Jeski, William Jodice, Chairperson David Marsh (arr. at 7:33pm), Alternate Shailesh Verma (arr. at 7:34pm), Vice Chairperson Paul Burnham (arr. at 7:40pm)

ABSENT: Louise Neary, Alternate Victor Dorobantu, Shawn Jacobaccio

ALSO PRESENT: Andrew Paterna, Town Council liaison

- 1. Call Meeting to Order:** Commissioner Linda Jeski called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.
- 2. Roll Call:** The above-mentioned members were introduced.
- 3. Guest – Matthew Galligan, Town Manager**

Presentation of two tax abatement proposals:

Costco: Mr. Galligan opened by stating that information in newspaper articles are somewhat incorrect. The entrances will not be on Clark Street. Mr. Galligan then gave some background on the project. A few years ago, he reached out to Costco and met with representatives of the company and afterwards they came and visited and felt it was a fit to locate a store here. A deal with Evergreen Walk has been made to locate the store behind LA Fitness. The biggest problem of the project is the site itself because a lot of site work will need to be done. Mr. Galligan then reviewed the financial information for the abatement request. An abatement cannot be applied to personal property, per state statutes. The project has been approved for a gas station by P&Z with the belief that this will draw more people to the location. The gas station will have a generator to be able to provide gas during widespread outages (such as after extreme weather events). The town council will be reviewing the request on Monday, April 15th. Commissioners then asked questions about the project. Commissioner S. Burnham questioned the calculations of the figure used for the determining 70% of the appraised value and Mr. Galligan confirmed that the figure should only include the value of the building, not the land. This changes the amount of year 1 tax to \$450,532. The calculations following this are correct. Commissioner Mitchell commented that he was surprised by the information presented at the economic development forum regarding the reduction of revenue from Evergreen Walk and Mr. Galligan stated that is was a mistake and the graph should have been shown in reverse. Commissioner Kilburn asked about the completion date for the project and Mr. Galligan responded that they are doing a geotechnical survey. Mr. Galligan then stated that since Costco doesn't do site work, the cost could be \$2 to \$3 million, Vice Chairperson P. Burnham asked why the abatement was calculated at 60% instead of 70% and Mr. Galligan replied that he is trying to wean companies from expecting 70%. He also stated that the town needs to start marketing to companies about why they need to be here and will be recommending this as a policy. Costco could build on another site if the site at Evergreen doesn't work since Matt sold the company on the town and not a specific site. Commissioner Jodice asked about the number of employees that Costco will employ, and Mr. Galligan was unsure of the number but that it was included in the original proposal. Commissioner Mitchell questioned whether the gas station will hurt local stations and Mr. Galligan replied that to purchase gas, buyers will have to be a member of Costco. Commissioner Jeski asked if anyone has expressed concerns about the traffic that will be generated by the project and Mr. Galligan informed the commission that the State Traffic Commission has seen the plan. The timing of

lights from exit 62 are to be changed and will become synchronized, essentially from Manchester to the 4-corners in the center of town. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham asked if an assessment has been done to consider installing another light and Mr. Galligan responded that most traffic will come from Buckland and that Evergreen is negotiating with the 55+ rental property to create a roadway network.

A **motion** to approve the requested abatement and send a letter of support to the Town Council was made by Commissioner Mitchell and **seconded** by Commissioner Murray and was ***unanimously approved. Motion passed.***

Educational Playcare LTD: Mr. Galligan gave some background on the current situation for daycare options in town and that they are currently at maximum capacity. The proposed site would be large enough to accommodate 250 kids and Educational Playcare LTD wants to be ready by September. The building will have enough room to accommodate before and after school care programs as well as operating as a daycare. Mr. Galligan explained that a 50% abatement, not 60% has been calculated. The business is family run, and some money will need to be spent on site work to improve the site line. The entrance will be off of Ellington Road just before the gas station. They are trying to buy additional property to increase their footprint. P&Z has expressed a traffic concern. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham questioned why the abatement is for 7 years at 50% and Mr. Galligan responded that he feels that another 2 years will help them since they may have additional site work costs to cover. Mr. Galligan reported that the daycare hired another traffic engineer to rework the plan and that technology is helping to make things easier. Chairperson Marsh asked if any architectural considerations are being made and Mr. Galligan replied that the project will have to appear before the Architectural Review Board. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham hopes that the landscaping and lighting will help the building to blend in with houses that surround the property. Commissioner Futtner thanked Mr. Galligan for being instrumental in bringing the daycare to town.

A **motion** to approve the Educational Playcare LTD project as presented and send a letter of support to the Town Council was made by Commissioner Kilburn and **seconded** by Commissioner Futtner and was ***unanimously approved. Motion passed.***

Mr. Galligan commented that he believes it is time to look at policies to clarify retention requirements and other aspects. He asked for input on the types of businesses the commission would like to see located in town. He also wants the commission to consider what levels of abatement they'd like to develop. He will ask Donna Thompson to send out the current abatement policy for review. Commissioner Mitchell commented that it would be beneficial to have enhancement of the system of rails for passenger use as well as commercial. Mr. Galligan replied that he agrees but that working with the railroad companies is often complicated.

Chairperson Marsh requested that Donna Thompson draft both letters of support and send them to him for signatures.

Chairperson Marsh pondered how to require companies coming to town to do what we want them to do here in town. He wants to bring in businesses, but projects that are approved are not considered for the visual aspects and believes that there needs to be a broader conversation and plan. Mr. Galligan agrees but that there needs to be a balance between the tax revenue generated and the attitude projected when bringing businesses to town. Commissioner Mitchell commented that the company Planimetrics conducted a study and created a vision with a village concept. He believes that some projects should

have appeared before the Architectural Review Board to ensure that the Planimetrics vision is followed through. He also stated that there should be some way of instilling that buildings are built as an enhancement to the community. Mr. Galligan responded that P&Z needs to know EDC's views and that everyone be on board. Chairperson Marsh replied that it's his understanding that an application can't be denied if they meet established criteria. Mr. Galligan explained that if an applicant/project meets the stated requirements and are denied, they can then seek legal recourse. But he could ask the town attorney to explore what the town can do to strengthen the Architectural Review Board. Chairperson March suggested forming a joint review board between P&Z and EDC. Commissioner Jodice commented that the town needs regulations that can be enforced. Vice Chairperson P. Burnham requested that the town look at how the vacant All-Phase building that can be occupied again. Commissioner S. Burnham asked about the Schweir House and Mr. Galligan replied that there was a proposal in-house and that the State DOT wants it picked up and turned around. However, the South Windsor Historical Society said that the house wouldn't be historical if it is moved so Mr. Galligan created a 501©3 fund to raise funds to pick it up and move the building to a new location. The house would be a great location for the Chamber to locate their business.

4. Adjournment

A **motion** to adjourn at 8:41pm was made by Commissioner Kilburn and **seconded** by Commissioner S. Burnham and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Potter
Clerk

Approved: April 24, 2019