

DRAFT
BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2013
BROOKFIELD TOWN HALL
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Hal Kurfehs called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present for the Board: Chairman Hal Kurfehs, Ann Amorossi, Jim Fisher, Nancy Tolmoff, and Amy Smith Deoliveira, Secretary.

Absent Members: Vice Chairman Mara Frankel, Dave Matte, and Joe Rocky.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the April 16, 2013 meeting were not approved, pending changes made by Chairman Hal Kurfehs. Ann Amorossi motioned to approve, seconded by Chairman Hal Kurfehs. The motion was unanimous.

CURRENT BUSINESS:

Welcome New EDC Member, Nancy Tolmoff: Having raised her family in Brookfield since taking residency in 1969, Nancy Tolmoff joins the EDC after successful careers as both an Interior Designer and Guidance Counselor for the Danbury Public School System, and currently maintains a private practice in town as a Marriage and Family Therapist and Life Coach. Ms. Tolmoff has previously served on the Brookfield Planning Commission, and after having met Chairman Hal Kurfehs through the Town Development program and impressing the Board with her creative Town Center video, Nancy was excited to gain a seat on the EDC. Being self-described as “always ready to do something and take it to the next level,” Nancy shows inspiring vision in seeing the Quarry being developed into a park, expressing interest in speaking with State Representative Dave Scribner regarding her concept. She likes to travel – so be sure to show her some gracious Brookfield hospitality when finding her on an adventure around the corner, or around the world!

Four Corners: Chairman Hal Kurfehs produced a Brookfield town map from which he will make a schematic, informing the Commission of the current status of evolution:

Laurel Hill Road: From South to North, there is approval for 72 rental units, and behind Brookfield Cleaners, approval for 13 condo units which is approximately on 4 acres of undeveloped, marketable land. On the left hand side, behind Hoyt Insurance and around the corner from Brookfield Cleaners, there is approval for 13 owner units. Dakota Partners plan to close on or around September 1st and would probably begin building in the fall of 2013 or the spring of 2014. On the SW corner of Laurel Hill and Federal Roads, an 8,000 square foot retail building has previously been approved, and a build-to-suit may be possible for a medical use interested in 4,000 square feet.

Federal Road: Below 777 Federal Road (the vacant office building), interest has been shown for the development of a mixed-use project.

Federal Road: In the SW quadrant, 79 apartment units over 21,000 square foot retail had been approved.

857-857A Federal Road: The 5 acres that was The Barnyard has met with approval for 101 apartments that may start building out in the fall of 2013 or spring of 2014; and the 42 condos adjacent to the north is well along in being built out.

Casablanca: Casablanca was approved for outdoor dining.

Station Road to Peters Home and Garden: This 16 acre area is being studied by an investor for mixed-use development.

Town Hall Walkway: Jim Fisher offered that if the walkway from Town Hall up to Four Corners were finished, a frozen yogurt retailer like Peachwave would do great in the summer months.

Sidewalks: The town put an RFP out for the study on the sidewalks. The purpose is to establish standardized recommendations for developers with regard to style, furniture, and lighting.

Brookfield Craft Center: As the buildings on the site are deemed historic and may not be able to be modified, Ann Amorossi advised they are in need of both water and structural repair. With regard to any revitalization, Chairman Hal Kurfels suggested that parking is the main issue, offering that an existing building on Still River, going toward Federal Road, is sitting on an acre and a half that would make an ideal parking lot as it may be large enough to honor the four-to-five parking space-per thousand square footage needed for retail buildings standard. It was mentioned that a café or small restaurant would be an idyllic accompaniment. Nancy Tolmoff offered that in maintaining the integrity of the site, a digital arts center would be terrific, and Chairman Hal Kurfels further suggested it be a mixed-use space where both digital and fine arts could co-exist.

Chick-fil-A: The chain restaurant is approved and will start building in either the fall of 2013 or the spring of 2014.

EDC Website Development: As the EDC website development remains in limbo due to a lack of approval for funds by the Selectmen, Chairman Hal Kurfels met with First Selectman Bill Davidson recently, who suggested a link to the town website. It was pointed out that the town website was strictly an administrative website developed from a template, whereas an EDC website would have to “sell” Brookfield and would have to provide follow-up tools and direction for interested investors. Bill Davidson recommended that the Commission hire a writer to flesh out a copy with selling points. Chairman Kurfels requested that the Commission define what is wanted out of the site, including various presentation points as well as easy access to associated facts such as demographics, transportation, schools, taxation, and regulation, giving the end user instant viable information. The EDC Members were asked to present their personal vision of the website at the next meeting. The next step would be to obtain estimates from website developers and then to present our recommendation to the BOS.

CEDS: Chairman Hal Kurfels previously provided the Commission with two articles; from The News-Times and Forbes Magazine, with regard to both regional and national economic development. In The News-Times and Forbes Magazine, both criticizing the State of Connecticut, the News-Times article emphasizes a regional approach to economic development. The Western Connecticut Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA) was created in 2010 and encompasses representation from the Housatonic Valley’s ten Municipalities, and is generating a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); a marketing document that will enable the region to set a course for the next five years. CEDS addresses the questions of regional economic growth, as well as strengths and weaknesses – the latter being identifying to transform them into additional strengths. Another objective is to qualify for infrastructure grants to aid our local economy. Chairman Hal Kurfels explained that the WCEDA can perhaps influence development within the area, citing the creation of a 30,000 square foot shopping center

scheduled to be built on renovated land near Costco, and how the introduction of both Costco and BJ's influenced the enrichment of Four Corners.

ADJOURNMENT: After a motion by Jim Fisher, seconded by Nancy Tolmoff, the meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.
