

REVISED DRAFT MINUTES
BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, June 17, 2014 7:00 PM ROOM 209

Chairman Kurfehs called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM with the following people in attendance:

Present: Chair Hal Kurfehs; Vice Chair Mara Frankel; Commissioner Greg Dembowski; Commissioner Nancy Tolmoff; Commissioner Jim Fisher

Absent: Secretary Dave Matte

Also Present: Andrea Wagner; Recording Secretary Emily Cole Prescott

1.) Approval of Meeting Minutes (05/27/14) – **Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Tolmoff seconded the motion, and it passed, with Commissioner Fisher and Vice Chair Frankel abstaining from the vote.**

2.) Updates – Chair Kurfehs shared with the Commission an email he had sent to Katherine Daniel as well as her comments regarding the Zoning Commission’s new regulation, specific to language in section 7(b), *“No more than forty percent of the ground floor square footage may be devoted to residential uses.”* Vice Chair Frankel asked Chair Kurfehs if he thought this percentage too high, and Chair Kurfehs replied that he thinks 60% of commercial space on the first floor may be a disaster. Originally, this regulation required that only twenty percent of the ground floor on road frontage be dedicated to commercial space. He stated that now with this regulation change 60% of the main floor would be dedicated to commercial space throughout all of the buildings, not just in the front buildings. Chair Kurfehs stated that retail on the main level and residential space above is not very desirable for people who want to rent the residential apartments, especially those units above restaurants due to smell and noise. Vice Chair Frankel mentioned that she is unsure why Chair Kurfehs disagrees with the regulation, because most mixed usage has commercial on the first floor and residential on the other floors. Vice Chair Frankel pointed out the other developments either approved and in the process of construction or not yet constructed which have residential use throughout the development. Chair Kurfehs stated that if five three-story 36,000 square foot buildings were to be built (with a 12,000 square foot allowable footprint each) and with an average 1200 square feet on one or two bedroom apartments, it would be possible to build 150 apartments. If 60% first floor commercial is required this would decrease the number of apartment units to 120 and mandate 36,000 square feet of commercial space, which is much too much to absorb. Chair Kurfehs pointed out the need for residential spaces, to provide the bodies to support retail. We have not reached the point where we can mandate more retail than developers and banks are willing to support. Vice Chair Frankel replied that she does not currently see the retail available for the services for the number of upcoming residential units; she stated she thinks it would be more useful to have the commercial space on the first floor, per the new regulation. Chair Kurfehs quoted the consultants

study that indicated that there was demand for at least 2,500 residential units within a ten-minute drive of the Four Corners. When the level of residential becomes a draw for retail it will be built out of self interest rather than by fiat. Vice Chair Frankel briefly reviewed the number of developments that have thus far been approved. She also mentioned some new commercial buildings and spaces that have been through the Zoning Commission for approval. Chair Kurfehs stated that the purpose of the four corners revitalization is to bring a sense of community to the area. Commissioner Dembowski stated that Chair Kurfehs has sent a letter to Katherine Daniel for forwarding to the Zoning Commission for review. Commissioner Dembowski noted that there is nothing for the Commission to act upon at this time.

Andrea Wagner entered the meeting room at 7:30 PM.

3.) EDC Website Training – Commissioner Dembowski stated that the Commission should discuss the completion of a few outstanding issues, and then there will be training for any interested Commissioners as well as E. Cole Prescott. The site is currently live, but is not yet ready to launch. Commissioner Dembowski noted main topics to complete: fact sheet, investment incentives page.

Incentive investment page – Commissioner Dembowski stated that the Board of Selectmen have drafted language with help from the Town Attorney, that was sent to a public hearing last week. The Board of Selectmen had decided to defer the vote on the ordinance until the special meeting that will be held next week. Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that First Selectman Bill Tinsley has agreed to write the copy for the tax incentive/abatement.

Fact Sheet – Commissioner Dembowski summarized that two months ago the Commission agreed to create the fact sheet after all of the other website pages had been completed. Andrea Wagner had a professional copywriter who will write five pages of text, which summarized some of the information on the website. The cost to create the design, graphs and copy for the fact sheet would be approximately \$250, although there could be an additional charge above the \$250 amount for this project, depending on the amount of time and writing needed to complete it. Commissioner Demobowski also noted that Pete Petersen had made some suggestions regarding the information that had been compiled. Commissioner Dembowski stated that his suggestions were to have a small business owner review the site and potentially someone who is looking to start a business to see how the site works for them. Also, Commissioner Dembowski noted that the other comment of Pete's was that the site is primarily focused on new business and does not have language to help existing businesses. Chair Kurfehs commented that existing businesses are more likely to grow the Town. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the site was written to explain how the process to open a business works. Chair Kurfehs stated that training is important, and the Commission should be able to direct developers where to find training. Commissioner Dembowski asked that the contact for the Economic Development Commission be changed to Bill Tinsley. Chair Kurfehs suggested that any one of the Commissioners could be a secondary contact. **Vice Chair Frankel made a motion to allow the Commission to spend up to \$500 for the creation of the fact sheet. Commissioner Fisher seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.** Commissioner Dembowski stated that he and Chair Kurfehs have been

working on collecting testimonials for the website, and two of the three people asked said that they will be getting the Commission the testimonials very soon. Vice Chair Frankel asked about the possibility of asking Norman Buzaid to give a testimonial, especially for the construction of the new building on Federal Road. Andrea Wagner cautioned that the Commission should be careful of focusing solely on the big businesses in Town. The Commission reviewed the smaller businesses that could be asked for testimonials. Commissioner Dembowski also stated that the Commission must do a newsletter release announcing the website launch. Chair Kurfehs and Andrea Wagner have reviewed the language for the Constant Contact email blast. Chair Kurfehs and Bill Tinsley will be co-writing a press release for news outlets. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the Commission should look at refreshing the testimonials every so often.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that the key components now to complete the site are the fact sheet and the incentive/investment pages. Andrea Wagner noted that the best website browser to use for viewing purposes is Google Chrome.

4.) Further Discussion – Vice Chair Frankel stated that the Zoning Commission has adopted new town center district regulations. She also noted the corridor sidewalk plans are before the DOT.

5.) Adjourn – **At 8:15 PM, Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and proceed to website training for those Commissioners who wished to be trained. Vice Chair Frankel seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

Chair Kurfehs and Commissioner Dembowski as well as E. Cole Prescott were trained by Andrea Wagner, website developer, from 8:20 PM to 9:20 PM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled on July 15, 2014.

