

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

July 20, 2015 – 7PM

Room 2 Town Hall

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by Chairman Ford. Commissioner attendance were: Bruce Goldstein, Bruce Fox, Beverly Carr, and Alternate Jean Walsh.

Absent were Andreas Bisbikos, John Dion, and Paul Catalano.

Others – Tamara Dimitri, First Selectman Stan Soby

Chairman Ford noted that he had received an email from Paul Catalano indicating that he would be resigning from the Commission due to family and business obligations. The Commission noted this with regret.

2. Approval of Minutes of June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The minutes of the June meeting were presented. A motion by Bruce Fox second by Beverly Carr to approve the minutes as presented was approved with Mr. Goldstein abstaining.
3. Addition to the Agenda: Commissioner Fox requested that the subject of Welcome Signs be discussed. This item was to be added as Item E for New Business, Commissioner Ford asked that several items be included:

Under Old Business

- a. Municipal Development Plans as item C
- b. Connecting with Municipal Partners as Item D
- c. Moving forward to DECD as Item E
  - i. Legislative Delegation discussion
- d. Appointment of Commission Secretary

The motion by Bruce Goldstein second by Bruce Fox to add the noted items passed unanimously.

4. Opportunity for the public. Commissioner Ford noted that the opportunity to discuss items not on the agenda were appropriate from the public. No requests were made.

5. New Business

- a. Tamara Dimitri was given the floor and discussed with the Commission the concept of providing stipend grants to businesses to improve their property. Her suggestions were fashioned after some programs which she was aware of in other communities. The premise would be that Businesses be allowed to apply to the commission for a grant the level of which would be determined in designing the program. The Business owner

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would be required to match the grant dollar for dollar. She suggested the focus of the program would be for improving the appearance of business property – say painting, small repairs, etc.

The Commission was impressed with the concept and significant discussion was held with Tamara on the possible set up and monitoring of this idea. It was noted that no funds were currently budgeted for this project. The commission felt that the project should be further considered and the concept developed further. A presentation will be necessary to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance

- b. New Developments in Colchester - As Adam Turner was absent this item was not discussed
  - c. Available development site map. Chariman Ford suggested to the commission that the Town's mapping resources be used to develop a map showing available properties which prospective business owners could review when considering Colchester for locating their site. It was agreed that Mr. Ford will peruse this idea with town staff.
  - d. Working to update town website and perhaps an EDC Facebook page was discussed and will be looked into as part of Item c.
  - e. Welcome Signs. Commissioner Fox presented an idea to enable the refurbishing of the Town Welcome signs which are showing their age. He proposed that the High School Shop class could be approached and that suggestions on what the new signs should look like could be sought. This topic was seen as a first step in changing the appearance of Colchester and enhancing our image to prospective businesses. Bruce will investigate options and report back to the Commission
6. Old Business
- a. Survey - Chairman Ford provided copies of the EDC survey as it stands and asked that each commissioner review the document and have suggestions ready for the next meeting.
  - b. CCM EDC Conference. Mr. Ford reported to the commission on the Conference he attended in May held by CCM. He expressed it was quite useful and offered several suggestions which he felt were implementable in Colchester
    - i. Business Visits are held by other EDC's as they have found that a better way to talk to existing business owners.
    - ii. CERC site finder meetings are held periodically and would be a good conference to attend and network Colchester's opportunities.
  - c. Moving forward to DECD. A brief discussion as held on our approach to DECD seeking funds to implement municipal development plans.
7. The Chairman noted that with the resignation of Adam Turner it was necessary to appoint a Secretary from among commission members to take minutes. Jean Walsh indicated a willingness to assume this position and the commission agreed with her assuming this role.
8. Adjournment. There being no further business before the commission Chairman Ford asked for a motion to adjourn. Jean Walsh so moved, Second by Bevelry Carr and passed unimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM