

Minutes – Economic Development Committee - Town of Deep River, CT

Date of meeting: Monday, Aug 20, 2018 Location: R. H. Smith/Deep River Town Hall

Members present: Jonathan Kastner, Russ Marth, Tom Perry, Bill Wahl

Absent: Pete Lewis, Ted Mackenzie, Adam Schwartzman

After a short welcome and preamble by the First Selectman, the committee members began their business. Mr. Marth offered to take minutes of the meeting since there were no officers yet selected. It was agreed by consensus that he act as Secretary Pro Tem until officers were chosen.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15, with R. Marth acting as moderator.

Motion to go forward and elect officers was made by J. Kastner, and seconded by B. Wahl. Discussion ensued as to whether selection of officers was appropriate at this time. At length it was decided to go forward. T. Perry nominated Russ Marth to serve as chairman and P. Lewis to serve as secretary of the EDC. B. Wahl seconded the nominations. Upon vote, both were elected to those positions unanimously.

First Selectman McDonald provided the town ordinance which stated the term of each member (3 years max). A copy was given to each member in attendance. It was noted that each member will be randomly selected to serve a certain “beginning” term in order to stagger the end date of each member.

Discussion ensued in regard to the night and dates as proposed earlier by the First Selectman. By consensus, it was decided to keep that schedule with no changes. All meetings to be on Mondays at 7pm at the Richard H. Smith / Deep River Town Hall, with the dates (unchanged) as:

September 17

October 15

November 19

December 17

As this first meeting had no agenda to follow, many ideas were discussed. These included the following:

- 1) Visiting the companies at the industrial park.
- 2) Meeting with the Merchants’ Association (they meet once per month?)
- 3) That we need to communicate with the local business community and “tell people who we are and what we are doing, that the EDC is reactivated.” It was discussed whether this could be best done via Facebook or using an area/page off the town’s website (more on this later).
- 4) That the EDC should have a meet-and-greet type of event, at some point, to introduce ourselves, our plans and get to know others in town.

- 5) It was suggested that we could send a letter to Deep River businesses announcing the restart of the EDC. Along with the letter, the following items were proposed to be included: a 1/3 sheet with “Do you have suggestions?” and “Do you have space available?” and “Are you looking for more space?” and “Should we be introducing ourselves to one of your associates?” etc.
- 6) It was suggested that the Valley Courier, Deep River New, Essex News and New London Day are all local publications that could have some immediate use for the EDC. Other, more mainstream and non-local publications were also mentioned.

Another topic that was discussed was whether EDC is regional in nature or Deep River-centric? It was noted that B. Wahl is involved with Essex EDC and J. Kastner is involved with Haddam/Chester EDC. Both men have attended recent meetings. Each was encouraged to continue their involvement.

Other topics briefly discussed:

- That there should/could be a regional central listing of available space in all local towns
- What does Deep River that other towns don't have?
- Tourism and Deep River's place in the area
- That the EDC should address “the image problem that Deep River has. If you haven't been to DR lately, you haven't seen how nice Deep River is now.”
- It was discussed whether the EDC should hire a PR person to write articles. It was noted that there are a handful of marketing people and writers on the committee at this time.
- That the EDC should find what spaces Deep River has available, how big and where.
- That Deep River has a unique incubator program and that the “Incubator Story” is important and should be brought to the attention of the media.
- Another topic discussed was, “the Planning & Zoning commission is the EDC's “partner” with whom we should work closely. It was noted that J Kastner is an alternate on P&Z and could act as liaison.

Quickly synthesizing some of these ideas and assessing the more immediate needs of the EDC and town of Deep River, the chair assigned certain action items to the following members:

- J Kastner is assigned to write (or produce) “The Incubator Story” (with Angus) from existing materials.
- B. Wahl and R. Marth are assigned to produce an EDC announcement letter to be sent to existing businesses.
- T. Perry to sketch out plans for an initial page on the town's web page. For now a “start” is requested, but it is imagined that this page could someday include available space and other information.
- Selectman McDonald and R. Marth to work on what spaces are available. This was noted as a difficult (but important) assignment and may take some time due to work loads of both men.

B. Wahl made motion to adjourn meeting, T. Perry seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by R. Marth - August 24, 2018