

Town of Newtown, CT

3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470

4-19-2011

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Economic Development Commission met on Tuesday, April 19, 2011, at the Newtown Municipal Center.

Present: Donald Sharpe, Gino Scarangella, Joseph Tarshis, Joseph Humeston, and Walt Motyka

Absent: Margaret Oliger, Steven Zvon, Thomas Murtha and Wes Thompson

Also Present: Anne Peters, Chair of the Newtown Inland Wetlands Commission and Bob Rau, consultant

Mr. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Public Participation: Ms. Peters asked the group if they had any questions for her in regards to the letter from the Inland Wetlands Commission about a conservation easement for the EDC Tech Park, Commerce Drive. At this time members of the commission did not have any questions for Ms. Peters.

Minutes of March 15, 2011: Mr. Humeston made a motion to accept the minutes from March 15, 2011. Mr. Motyka seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports: Director of Economic & Community Development – written report to minutes. Since Ms. Stocker was not able to attend the meeting her report will be discussed at the next EDC meeting, in May. Mr. Sharpe did note that the AMS report, which was to have been distributed today was not available, He said the report concluded that there is a market for a Tech Park. Mr. Sharpe asked the group if anyone had any questions about Ms. Stocker's report. There were no questions.

Survey Actions:

Signage Work Group: (Mr. Zvon) Mr. Zvon was not at the meeting to update the commission on signage issues.

New Business and Regulation Road Map: (Mr. Motyka) Mr. Motyka distributed an updated road map for navigating Borough of Newtown Zoning Regulations. He said that the large documentation for the borough is constantly being updated. He put the road map in logical steps for a new business to follow. He will add contact information to the road map with names and phone numbers. Mr. Scarangella asked Mr. Motyka who the target audience would be for the road maps. Mr. Motyka responded that the road maps will be summaries for any new business in Newtown. They will be summaries for new business people to figure out where they need to go and what they need to do to open their business in Newtown. Mr. Motyka added that the road maps will be a "helping hand" to them. Mr. Scarangella suggested making the road maps PDFs on the EDC website.

-EDC Coordinator/Consultant Projects: (Mr. Sharpe, Ms. Oliger, and Mr. Murtha) Mr. Sharpe said that this committee has not met recently because budget implementation methods are still being decided.

Utilization of EDC Website: (Mr. Sharpe, Ms. Oliger and Mr. Murtha) Mr. Sharpe reported that this is not active yet.

Public Awareness Plan: (Mr. Sharpe, Ms. Oliger and Mr. Murtha) Mr. Sharpe said that this methodology is still being decided..

Town Staff Meeting Survey Presentation: (Ms. Stocker) Absent, no report

Buy Local with Chamber: (Mr. Tarshis) Mr. Tarshis said the Chamber of Commerce is currently developing a restaurant week after Labor Day and draw patrons to various Newtown restaurants.

Mr. Tarshis also attended a Sandy Hook Organization for Prosperity meeting and outlined a Beer Fest plan. The Beer Fest will be a core fundraiser for the Rotary Club. Mr. Tarshis is considering using a field on the Fairfield Hills campus for the Beer Fest. He added that all the Newtown businesses that have a footprint in Newtown will

be invited to set up at the event. There will also be a section for nonprofits and volunteer groups in Newtown. Mr. Humeston asked if a date had been decided yet. Mr. Tarshis responded that it will most likely be in May 2012. Mr. Tarshis added that he envisions this to be an annual event. Mr. Humeston said that Newtown is losing the Holiday Festival that used to be held the first week of December. Mr. Sharpe added that the Christmas Tree Lighting will continue.

Integrate Business Interest with Social Media: Mr. Scarangella volunteered for this project.

Support Business Districts Plan: (Mr. Humeston) Mr. Humeston reported that he attended the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee's café. He also plans to attend the FFHMPCR meeting on April 28, 2011. He notified Michael Floros, chairman of the FFHMPCR, of the EDC's support of commercial and limited residential development on the Fairfield Hills campus. The commission members discussed the possibility of an 160-unit apartment complex in Cochrane House. He added that there is great concern for the impact this would have on parking at Glander Fields. Mr. Humeston said that the housing issue and the commercial issue are bringing up lots of conversation and controversy. Mr. Humeston added that the public support is for tearing the buildings down. It is estimated that it would cost about \$18 million to take the contaminated buildings down. Mr. Scarangella asked if there were any cost estimates about restoring the buildings. Mr. Sharpe said that at this time he knew of none. Mr. Scarangella added that aesthetics should be taken into consideration; it is not just an issue about dollars and cents. Mr. Motyka mentioned the importance of thinking "outside the box." He added that the EDC should be taking the lead because Fairfield Hills is part of the town, not a separate entity. Mr. Humeston proposed having a private university on the Fairfield Hills campus.

Mr. Humeston reported that the FFHMPCR plans to distribute a survey to the public at the end of May and a final report has a target date of June 15. He encouraged everyone on the EDC to participate in the survey when it becomes available. Mr. Motyka added that the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee does not have a planning function but is reviewing the uses of Fairfield Hills and deciding what should be added possible uses or taken off the table. Mr. Sharpe said that there are already 14 acres set aside at Fairfield Hills for commercial use. Mr. Sharpe stated that the EDC job is to facilitate whatever is decided on Fairfield Hills from a commercial and residential standpoint.

Mr. Rau added that the Planning and Zoning Commission met a couple weeks ago and discussed using Cochrane house as a residential development. He said that the hearings will continue on May 5 in council chambers. He said that most people seem to be against housing at Fairfield Hills. He added that affordable housing is a big issue for Newtown. Mr. Rau said the state mandates that each town have 10% of its housing as affordable. Newtown only has 15 units.

Measure Payback of Implemented Measures: open

Compare Newtown Plans to Other Towns: open

New Business: none.

Mr. Sharpe asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 pm. Motioned seconded by Mr. Humeston. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Sharlow, Clerk