

Town of Newtown, CT

3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470

6-21-2011

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Economic Development Commission met on Tuesday, June 21, 2011, at the Newtown Municipal Center.

Present: Donald Sharpe, Thomas Murtha, Margaret Oliger, Joseph Humeston, and Walt Motyka

Absent: Joseph Tarshis, Gino Scarangella, and Steven Zvon

Also Present: Pat Llodra - First Selectman, Elizabeth Stocker – Director of Economic and Community to Development, Fred Hurley – Director of Public Works, and Bob Rau - consultant

Ms. Oliger called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Public Participation: None

Minutes of May 17, 2011: *Mr. Murtha made a motion to accept the minutes from May 17, 2011. Mr. Sharpe seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Mr. Hurley on behalf of the WSA: Mr. Hurley reported that Newtown did receive a grant from the state for \$325,000 to use to add solar energy at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. He said the final lot lines have not been drawn yet. He did show the commission a map of the potential location of the ground mount solar system. The group did have some discussion about where the panels could be located.

Ms. Stocker asked Mr. Hurley if he had a timeline for the installation. He responded that the panels need to be ordered. There would probably not be construction until August or September. He hopes to have the system operational by November or December. Mr. Motyka asked Mr. Hurley how much power the solar panels will generate. Mr. Hurley responded that they should replace about 25-35% of the power at the plant. Ms. Oliger asked when the exact locations of the panels will be known. Mr. Hurley said that won't be known until sometime this summer. Mr. Motyka asked if there will be a fence around the solar panels. Mr. Hurley said that yes, they will be putting a fence up around the system.

Mr. Hurley added that some room will be left for expansion. He also said that he will work with Mr. George Benson to make sure the lines are correct.

Guest: Pat Llodra: Ms. Llodra stressed that she thinks it is very important to elevate EDC's profile. She said the legislative council and the selectman have expressed concern that they don't see enough economic development in Newtown. She recommended that the members of

the EDC think of ways to ensure everyone in the town government knows what they are doing to develop Newtown as well as to preserve the culture and environment of the town.

Ms. Llodra also said she reviewed the Plan of Conservation and Development and that the priority listed as 1B should be reworked. She said that the language should be consistent with the development Fairfield Hills. She added that she thinks Fairfield Hills should be considered a part of Newtown and not a separate entity.

She believes that they should think of economic development in the town as a whole. Ms. Llodra is very passionate about developing neighborhoods. She said Sandy Hook is a great example of the power of what can happen and should happen. She told the EDC not to worry too much about Fairfield Hills. Currently there is not enough money to put into development at that site. The town doesn't have money to tear down the buildings or to rebuild the buildings. She plans to dictate resources to this cause as they become available.

Ms. Llodra noticed that the EDC is working on a lot of different projects. She said she would be happy to support their efforts with supplies and/or materials.

Ms. Llodra did add that she has some concern about the decisions that the Design Review Board are making, particularly the new Walgreens sign. She said it might be a good idea for the EDC to work with this board. Mr. Murtha added that it is unfortunate that the signs fall within code and that Planning and Zoning would need to change the regulations first before any major changes in signage could be made. Ms. Llodra feels that addressing the signage issues might be worthwhile use of P & Z's time. She added that she has a meeting coming up with the P & Z and will discuss the issue with them.

Ms. Llodra brought up the importance of getting a sewer system in the Hawleyville area. She said this is going to be a challenge financially. The system will cost about 4 million dollars but there is not money for it. Sewers need to be put in for the projects that want to build on the 133 acres.

Mr. Humeston asked if a developer would be willing to pay for the sewers. Mr. Motyka responded that Boehringer-Ingelheim in Danbury did that. Ms. Stocker said it would be very possible; there are various ways of accomplishing this.

Reports: Director of Economic & Community Development and Budget Update – Ms. Stocker sent the report out to the members of the group via email.

Ms. Stocker requested a volunteer to write an article for the New England Journal of Real Estate. She feels that it would be a great way to promote the commission and explain what the Newtown EDC does. Ms. Olinger volunteered to write the article. Ms. Stocker said the deadline for the article is Friday, July 1st.

Ms. Stocker said there is about \$13,000 remaining in the budget. She believes that Tech Park will take care of this money. Mr. Murtha suggested that if there is any money left over to encumber it for future use. Ms. Stocker said that would be fine but it needs to be for a particular vendor with a purpose. Mr. Murtha and Mr. Motyka felt that any leftover money should be used for printing. Ms. Stocker agreed.

AFS Project Update: Mr. Rau reported that AFS got approval from the relevant commissions. The only thing left for them to do is paperwork. Mr. Rau went over some of the history of the AFS project. He said that Ms. Llodra was very supportive of the project. Mr. Rau added that there needs to be more development in town but he feels it is necessary to keep with the character of Newtown.

EDC Responsibilities and Draft Document: Ms. Oliger wrote a document stating the responsibilities of the members of the EDC. In this document it states that the EDC is a working commission that meets the third Tuesday of each month. The EDC also has special meetings from time to time and each EDC meeting lasts about 2-3 hours. There is a lot of work to do and additional work and time needs to be put in between meetings. *Mr. Sharpe made a motion to make the Responsibilities of the Economic Development Commission document a part of Ms. Stocker's package. Mr. Murtha seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Survey Actions:

Signage Work Group: (Mr. Murtha) Mr. Murtha said this is not an easy thing to change. He said that the P & Z need to be receptive to the EDC recommendations and that the P & Z feel that there are "fires to put out and this is not a fire." Mr. Murtha added that it will be an uphill battle but a necessary one. He feels it is important that Ms. Llodra supports the EDC on this issue. Mr. Motyka suggested using the Fairfield Hills design document as a guide. Mr. Sharpe added that he might be able to get some of the people that expressed concern with signage on their surveys to help the cause.

New Business and Regulation Road Map: (Mr. Motyka) Mr. Motyka distributed an updated road map for navigating Borough of Newtown Zoning Regulations. He said he met with George Benson and showed him the road map. It was well received. The next one that Mr. Motyka will be working on is the Planning and Zoning process.

EDC Coordinator/Consultant Projects: (On Hold) Ms. Stocker said that there wasn't money in the budget for this position but she did get an intern to work with her on projects. The intern is a WCSU senior majoring in Communications. She will start on July 6 and work July and August. Mr. Sharpe asked how many hours the intern will work each week. Ms. Stocker replied that she will work 20 hours a week but will be flexible depending on the projects at hand.

Utilization of EDC Website and Public Awareness (Mr. Sharpe and Ms. Oliger) Ms. Oliger said that when they have deliverables they will present them and show the town what economic development is taking place throughout Newtown. She feels that it is important to build an appreciation for what the EDC does. She suggested inviting other members of other commissions to attend an EDC meeting. There will also be a press release coming out about what the EDC has accomplished during the first 6 months of 2011. New pictures will also be updated.

Town Staff Meeting Survey Presentation: (Complete)

Buy Local with Chamber: (Mr. Tarshis) Mr. Tarshis was absent.

Integrate Business Interest with Social Media: (Mr. Scarangella) Mr. Scarangella was absent.

Support Business Districts Plan: (Mr. Humeston) Mr. Humeston reported that he spent a lot of time focusing on Fairfield Hills but that he needs to shift his focus to the town of Newtown as a whole. He updated the group on the work of the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee. He said the FHMPRC's vision statement will be coming soon.

Measure Payback of Implemented Measures: open

Compare Newtown Plans to Other Towns: open

New Business:

Mr. Motyka asked Ms. Stocker if she could get some more information about Stewart Airport in Newburgh, NY and its connection to highway 84. Ms. Stocker added that it might be worthwhile to look into Oxford Airport and Bradley Airport.

Ms. Stocker extended an invitation to the members of the commission to attend the Fairfield County Commercial Brokers luncheon in Monroe on Friday. She also asked the group if anyone would like her ticket to the Travelers Golf Championship for Wednesday. She is unable to attend.

Ms. Olinger said she thought a “bus tour” should be conducted by the members of the EDC before they take people on tours. Ms. Stocker said that the town used to do a tour of businesses each January.

Mr. Humeston asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 pm. Motioned seconded by Mr. Sharpe. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Sharlow, Clerk