

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING
July 19, 2011**

These minutes are subject to the approval of the Economic Development Commission

Present: Don Sharpe; Joseph Humeston; Joseph Tarshis; Walter Motyka and Jean Leonard

Absent: Thomas Murtha, Margaret Oliger and Gino Scarangella

Also present: Elizabeth Stocker, Director of Economic and Community Development

Mr. Sharpe called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

The first order of business was to welcome Jean Leonard as a new member of the Commission.

Public Participation: None

Minutes of June 21, 2011. Mr. Humeston made a motion to accept the minutes of June 21, 2011 as submitted. Mr. Motyka seconded the action. The motion carried unanimously

Reports:

Ms. Stocker distributed her "REPORT BY ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION July 2011" including the following subjects:

Spath Bjorklund land use consultant David Bjorklund reports preliminary work is going forward to obtain Army Corp of Engineers approval for Tech Park access. Mr. Sharpe explained the background to Ms. Leonard.

Copies of an article by Margaret Oliger, in the New England Real Estate Journal of July 15-11, 2011 were distributed and posted on the EDC Web site

A report "STATUS OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (includes Assisted/Congregate Living Developments) NEWTOWN CONNECTICUT" was distributed

Ms. Stocker, Ms. Oliger and the First Selectman had a conference call with the law firm Robertson Cole about experiences that Stamford had with setting up a small business incubator program. High costs will be a challenge. She asked for further input.

An office has been set up an EDC intern from Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) who is starting to start today to assist with data collection and EDC projects.

An analysis of The Newtown EDC E-News – June 2011 e-Blast distributed June 21, 2011 to 622 Newtown EDC contact list was distributed

Mr. Humeston referred to a Fairfield Hills study commission survey and asked about possible glitches in computer data that might delay completion of the survey, which reportedly will be ready by the end of this month.

Financial Year 2011/2011 Budget & Work Program

Ms. Stocker distributed details in a document entitled “Budget – work Program Review for FY 2011-2012 Economic Development Commission”. The budget of \$30,000 was broken down into line items and discussed. She cited positive feedback from New England Real Estate Journal advertising.

A general discussion followed on the content of the proposed budget. In response to commission requests, Ms. Stocker will arrange to have business cards printed for the commissioners and will price out possible lapel pins.

Ms. Stocker distributed a worksheet listing Priority – Goals – Action – Forecast/Actual 11 and Forecast/Actual 12. She requested feedback from the commission members. Mr. Sharpe noted that it is important to document all expenses. Ms. Stocker has been asked to make several monthly presentations to the Legislative Council discussing the current makeup of the commercial-industrial segment of the town’s Grand List and other topics affecting appropriate economic development in Newtown.

Mr. Motyka noted online programs used by Realtors showing the particulars of properties. Ms. Stocker said that the EDC has a property search line. Fairfield Hills Campus property could be advertised giving people an idea of what the property looks like. Ms. Stocker volunteered to give a tutorial to new members at an upcoming meeting on such electronic presentations. Mr. Motyka said the next hurdle in properly utilizing the campus property is to get a master plan done to cover proposed and updated uses. He added that Fairfield Hills should be considered as an integral part of the town not as an independent element..

Ms. Stocker showed the commission members two surveys of Tech Park property prepared by Public Works Director Fred Hurley who wishes to have the land deeded to the Water and Sewer Authority (WSA) as a site for solar panels for the sewer plant. She went through the proposed development and locations of the solar panels. Mr. Motyka proposed asking WSA to offer access to sewer and water connections to the Tech Park in exchange for the requested land. He and Mr. Humeston will discuss the matter with WSA Chairman Dick Zane and the EDC expects to act on the matter in August.

It as noted that the Chamber of Commerce may hire a clerk to record the e-mail addresses for of all businesses in town. The EDC informally agreed to pay up to \$500 to help prepare the list. Ms. Leonard would like this done this summer. The commission agreed to give Ms. Stocker authority to take this out of a line item for small purchases,.

The flier for “Newtown Restaurant Week September 6th – 16th” was distributed. Commission discussed possible sponsorship options for the projects

Mr. Motyka made a motion to earmark \$125.00 for a half-page color ad for the Restaurant Week. Seconded by Mr. Humeston. After further discussion **Mr. Motyka the motion was amended to approve \$250.00 for a full-page ad. Mr. Humeston seconded the amendment. The motion carried unanimously.**

Discussion & Development of a Strategic Action Plan for Economic Development

Mr. Sharpe distributed a Working Draft of a new plan of economic development and sought input. After a discussion, revisions and approvals of the content by the commissioner, Ms. Olinger will put the results into a computer model that presents the individual “Goals, Strategies, Actions” in a usable format. There were highlighted pieces that required discussion and inserts. Part of the discussion revolved around EDC’ possibly

arranging several small business seminars. It was decided that morning (breakfast) meetings were preferable and scheduled either monthly or quarterly. There would be a need for a subcommittee comprised of two or three EDC members to guide the process. Mr. Tarshis went on to speculate how many home cooking business there are and if there are 200 perhaps a certified kitchen could be considered in one of the small buildings at Fairfield Hills. Ms. Stocker advised that the Department of Agriculture (DOA) could help. Mr. Motyka said and others agreed that a new draft of the Goals-Strategy-Action plan should be circulated by e-mail for additional revisions. Final action is planned for the August EDC meeting.

Survey Action Committees

Signage Work – Mr. Murtha was not present

New Business and Regulation Road Map – Mr. Motyka distributed two charts “New Business Regulatory ‘Road Map’” and “Road Map – Borough of Newtown Zoning Regulations”. This should simplify things for businesses moving into existing space.

EDC Coordinator/Consultant Projects – On hold

Utilization of EDC Website – Ms. Stocker will use the intern wherever possible

Public awareness plan – Ms. Olinger was not present

Town Staff Meeting Survey Presentation – Complete

Buy Local W/Chamber – Mr. Tarshis explained the plan for a Fathers’ Day Weekend scheduled for 2012. This will be held on a field at Fairfield Hills. The plan is to outline a map of Newtown with its roads so people can identify the location of their business. This is a Rotary sponsored event.

Integrate Business Interest W/Social Media – Someone else needs to be assigned

Support Business Districts Plan, Mr. Humeston had nothing to report

Measure Payback Of Implementation Measures – Open

Compare Newtown Plan to Other Towns – Open

Adjournment:

Mr. Humeston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Motyka. The motion was carried unanimously

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Wilkin, Clerk.
