

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

The Newtown Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, in Meeting Room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

**Present:** Chairman Donald Sharpe; Vice-Chairman Walter Motyka; Vice-Chairman Elana Bertram.

**Absent:** Jean Leonard; Allan Song; James Gulalo; Joseph Humeston; Martin Gersten.

**Also Present:** Elizabeth Stocker, Director of Economic and Community Development; Michael Burton, President, Sandy Hook Organization for Prosperity; one member of the press and several members of the public.

**Donald Sharpe** called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

**Public Participation:**

**Margaret Oliger**, Great Newtown Reunion – spoke of the reunion to be held at Fairfield Hills on July 27, 2013. She asked the EDC to consider being a sponsor of the event.

**Andrew Deery**, Hunter Gregory Realty, 1 Gorham Island, Westport, CT. Company owns 164 Mt. Pleasant Road as well as other properties in the area. They have a proposed 26,000 square foot building that could house a dialysis clinic as well as other tenants. Construction could begin in a few weeks and would take approximately one year to complete. They are looking for some relief in expenses in the form of the town's Business Incentive Plan. Mr. Deery asked for the EDC to act quickly in their decision regarding the Business Incentive Plan as it relates to his proposed building. **Don Sharpe** said that the EDC would also try to expedite the process with other Newtown commissions and boards.

**Dr. Curtis Beck**, Curtis Beck Orthodontics, 12 Queen Street, Newtown – Is looking to build a new facility at 12 Queen Street. It would be a 5,750-square-foot, two story building that would house his orthodontic practice as well as other potential tenants. Dr. Beck is looking to receive relief in his expenses by applying for the town's Business Incentive Plan. **Don Sharpe** reviewed the process that the BIP application must go through with other commissions in order to be approved.

**Elana Bertram** motioned to approve the **Meeting Minutes for the March 19 regular meeting.** **Walt Motyka** seconded the motion. The minutes were passed unanimously.

**Reports:**

**STEAP Business Assistance Committee Report:** **Elana Bertram** gave a summary of the latest recommendations of this committee (see below). Ms. Bertram stated that if these recommendations were approved, it would complete Phase One of the Business Assistance Grant process.

<u>Business / Contact</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Rec Pmt</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Villa	4 Riverside Road, SH	\$5,400	9,830+5,400=15,230
Stone River Grille, LLC	32 Jeremiah Road, SH	\$10,374	8,974+10,374=19,348
Porco Construction	P.O. Box 69	\$0	
Porco Karate	P.O. Box 69	\$0	
MISITI	P.O. Box 69	\$2,224	
Toy Tree	SH	\$0	incomplete application
UPS Store	261 South Main Street	\$6,180	
Executive Transport	90 South Main Street	\$6,189	
	P.O. Box 130 Woodbury,		
Demitasse	CT 06798	\$4,141	
Sandy Hook Deli	102 Church Hill Road, SH	\$0	incomplete application

**\$34,508**

Walt Motyka motioned to approve payments as recommended by the STEAP Business Assistance Committee. Elana Bertram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Elizabeth Stocker** summarized all the applications for the grant program:

- 29 applicants were awarded grant money
- 3 applications were rejected
- 2 applications had insufficient documentation
- 2 applications were received after the deadline and were not considered

**Don Sharpe** asked for letters of commendation to be written to members of the STEAP grant committee. **Ms. Stocker** will write the letters.

#### **Phase Two of the STEAP Grant:**

**Mike Burton**, President of SHOP – Thanked the commission for its work in reviewing grant applications and recognized that it was a difficult job. **Mr. Burton** spoke of the main objectives for subsequent phases of the grant. One objective is to offer additional business assistance grants due to the reduced customer base from the relocation of Sandy Hook School. These new grants would be offered to Sandy Hook businesses only. Another objective is to have an advertising fund to promote monthly events planned for 2013.

**Walt Motyka** said he had spoken at a meeting that discussed potential school locations and explained the impact that moving the school would have on Sandy Hook businesses.

**Elana Bertram** stated that she thought it would be good to have one EDC member on any future SHOP committee for future phases of the grant process.

**Walt Motyka** stated that he has concerns that granting funds only to Sandy Hook businesses that have competitors in town would create the appearance of an unfair advantage for Sandy Hook-based businesses. **Mr. Motyka** thought the idea of offering no interest loans to businesses may contribute to the longevity of Sandy Hook businesses. **Elizabeth Stocker** agreed that a revolving loan process was a good idea as businesses adjust to a “new normal” and that a third party could manage the loans. **Elana Bertram** reminded the commission that any proposals for future phases need to go to the EDC and state for approval.

Discussion ensued regarding potential marketing and advertising programs, signage and other ideas for future activities to help revitalize business in the Sandy Hook Design District. The commission indicated that SHOP and the EDC would consider possible revision of the program and vote at its next meeting. **Ms. Stocker** asked if there was anything needed by SHOP right away. **Mr. Burton** requested money to pay for radio advertising for upcoming activities.

**Elana Bertram** motioned to approve up to \$2,000 for advertising for SHOP. **Walt Motyka** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Elizabeth Stocker**, Director of Economic and Community Development:

Reported that the CT Main Street group will be talking to SHOP at their next meeting on May 7.

**Buy Local Campaign:** **Ms. Stocker** gave an update on the upcoming ‘The Newtown Way: Buy Local First’ campaign being developed by ED coordinator **Betsy Paynter**. Window clings and stickers are available, a banner will be hung on Queen Street and the campaign will be promoted at the Chamber of Commerce’s Destination Newtown event.

**A Newtown Business Directory** is being developed by **Ms. Paynter** that will be a comprehensive listing of businesses in town.

**Business Incubator Update:** **Elana Bertram** said four new graduate students from Sacred Heart University will meet with **Ms. Stocker** and herself in the next week to explore possible ways of creating such a program in Newtown.

**Don Sharpe** discussed initiatives that have been launched or completed by the Economic Development Commission and Department of Economic and Community Development in calendar 2012 and the first months of 2013.

**Don Sharpe** presented his letter of resignation as -chairman of the Newtown Economic Development Commission. He will continue as a member of the commission. Discussions regarding election of a new Chair will take place in the future.

**Walt Motyka** motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 PM. The motion was seconded by Elana Bertram and passed unanimously.

