

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

The Newtown Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2013, in Meeting Room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

Present: Chairwoman Jean Leonard, Donald Sharpe; Allan Song; James Gulalo; Joseph Humeston.

Absent: Vice-Chairman Walter Motyka; Vice-Chairman Elana Bertram; Martin Gersten.

Also Present: Elizabeth Stocker, Director of Economic and Community Development; Bob Rau.

Jean Leonard called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Public Participation: None

Don Sharpe motioned to approve the meeting minutes for the April 16 regular meeting. **Allan Song** seconded the motion. The minutes were passed unanimously.

Don Sharpe motioned to approve the meeting minutes for the April 30 special meeting. **James Gulalo** seconded the motion. The minutes were passed unanimously.

Reports:

STEAP Business Assistance Grant – Phase II: **Liz Stocker** said Kimberly Whitaker of the CT Main Street Program had attended a SHOP meeting and made a presentation. Tripp Muldrow, a consultant, may talk to a small group of businesses regarding post-tragic event strategies for businesses.

SHOP has made suggestions regarding how they would like the Phase II money to be allocated: \$50K for a second phase of lost business grants, \$30K marketing for area, \$170K for further streetscape projects, including extending sidewalk to firehouse to allow for parking for area shopping and events. Discussion ensued regarding the EDC's suggestion of a revolving loan fund for businesses to access. SHOP needs to come back to the EDC for further discussion of Phase II. **Ms. Stocker** will follow up with some businesses and Mike Burton of SHOP to see what their needs are. **Jean Leonard** will try to attend a SHOP meeting for further discussion on Phase II.

Director of Economic and Community Development Report:

Brownfields Conference: Ms. Stocker told about the recent conference in Atlanta. Among others, she attended sessions on how to position brownfield properties for sale / lease. It is necessary for work to be done on a pamphlet for marketing of properties to find interested parties.

EPA Grant – Danbury Hall / Single Family Houses: Ms. Stocker and Kimberly Clarke (Eolas Environmental) met with the State Historic Officer as is necessary as part of the remediation / demolition project. A project manager from the Building Site Commission will oversee the entire project. There is \$200K allocated in the CIP as well as a \$200K grant that is expected to cover the cost of this project. Danbury Hall and single family houses locations are currently slated to be open space after the project, with no immediate plans for development.

Batchelder: This property needs to be marketed for reuse. An EPA grant for \$150K was obtained to clean up the property. Ms. Stocker has reached out to a few firms to market the property.

28A and 28B Glen Road: This property has been through foreclosure due to lack of payments on taxes. Ms. Stocker noted that quotes for an appraisal will need to be done on this 1.5 acre property with a house, garage and industrial building. This property borders the Sandy Hook Design District.

Sandy Hook Auto and Marine: The Town of Newtown is looking to foreclose on this property due to lack of tax payments. The process is delayed in the courts. Ms. Stocker stated that an appraisal of this property will be done as part of the court process.

Ms. Stocker reviewed the EDC Coordinator's Report from Betsy Paynter. Liz Stocker discussed some information from Ms. Paynter's report regarding taxes on commercial properties. While the appraised values of most properties have gone down (approximately 26%), the taxes on many of the properties are going up. Businesses have expressed their concern about the high tax level in Newtown vs. other towns in the region. This is an area of concern for businesses. Discussion ensued as to the benefit of extending sewer lines into Hawleyville in order to draw more businesses to Newtown, thus hopefully helping to reduce taxes.

Sacred Heart University / Business Incubator: Discussion will be held on this topic at the June 18 EDC meeting.

Business Incentive Program: Two applications (Dr. Curtis Beck and Hunter / Gregory) were approved to be forwarded for further approvals at the April 30 EDC special meeting. The Board of Selectmen will review on June 3, 2013. If approved, the applications will move onto the Board of Finance on June 10 and the Legislative Council on June 19 for approvals. EDC members should attend these meetings if possible.

CPACE: Ms. Stocker will follow up on this program. Funding is available which could benefit Newtown.

Hawleyville Sewers: Don Sharpe noted that the Municipal budget has passed at town referendum. \$5 million is necessary to increase the sewer capacity to Hawleyville. \$500K will be used to do initial research for the project. When this project moves ahead, it will be a major help to EDC projects, as properties will be able to be marketed as 'sewer ready'.

New Business:

Beardsley Zoo / Newtown Day: Liz Stocker noted that June 15 is Newtown Day at Beardsley Zoo. An email must be sent to the EDC members to determine their availability to attend to 'meet and greet' event attendees.

Joe Humeston motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 PM. The motion was seconded by James Gulalo and passed unanimously.