

The Newtown Economic Development Commission held a special meeting on Tuesday May 13, 2014, in Meeting Room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Present: Chairwoman Jean Leonard; Joseph Humeston ; Paul Fadus; Al Roznicki and Matthew Mihalcik.

Absent: Vice Chairman Elana Bertram; Martin Gersten and James Gulalo.

Also Present: Elizabeth Stocker, Director Economic and Community Development; Betsy Paynter, Economic Development Coordinator; Bob Rau.

Jean Leonard called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

Public Participation:

None

Meeting Minute Review:

Joe Humeston motioned to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2014 special meeting. **Paul Fadus** seconded the motion and the minutes were accepted.

Reports / Discussion / Action:

Chairwoman, EDC

- **Fairfield Hills zone change** - A meeting took place with the Chair of P&Z, Chair of FHA, Chair of EDC and staff regarding an addition of a permitted use to the FHAR zone. This change would allow the inclusion of residential dwellings above commercial properties. **Joe Humeston** supported the idea of the zone addition and believed it is important to the campus to attract young professionals to spark economic growth. Discussion took place as to the benefits of having residential above the commercial units, unit sizes, tax implications of residential vs. commercial property and the proposed zone addition was altered to reflect the discussion outcome.

Joe Humeston motioned to endorse and move forward a zone addition 6.03.300 (28) to the FHA for review “Residential dwellings within a commercial building and above any permitted commercial use. The individual dwellings shall be a minimum of eight hundred (800) square feet.” **Paul Fadus** seconded the motion and it passed with four votes. **Al Roznicki** abstained from the vote.

- **Commission involvement** – The Chair noted that EDC responsibility does not end at the meetings. Much work needs to be done between meetings. Areas of responsibility were assigned.

- Eagle Hill (approved location for rehab facility) and Fulton Property (33 acres with air strip) – **Paul Fadus** will research the possible uses for these unique properties
- Tech Park – **Matthew Mihalcik** will follow developments on this property. The latest development in the area near this property was the conveyance of land from the State to an animal sanctuary. Discussion took place as to how the property would be accessed.

- SHOP – **Joe Humeston** will continue as liason.
- Sewers – **Al Roznicki** will continue following developments related to the sewers for the time being. He presented an update from the May 8 public presentation for the Hawleyville sewer project. The sewers have been discussed for a long time and based on past estimates, **Mr. Roznicki** thinks the cost of the current project is reasonable. He noted three points from the meeting: 1) a benefit assessment to properties on the new line will be paid for over 20 years at an interest rate below 3%; 2) property owners are responsible for the cost to hook up their facility to the sewer line; 3) ongoing charges will be based on water flow or 90% of their water bill. Discussion also took place regarding grinder pumps.
- Fairfield Hills – **Jean Leonard**
- Business incubator – **Elana Bertram**
- EPA brownfields – **Elizabeth Stocker**. Work was done by **Ms. Bertram and Mr. Gersten** regarding foreclosed properties which was submitted to legal.
- STEAP
- Business Incentive Program – **Jean Leonard, Elizabeth Stocker**
- New business development – **Matthew Mihalcik, Jean Leonard**
- Revenue generating projects – **Al Roznicki**

Matthew Mihalcik was thanked for attending the Vital Rain grand opening. Additional ground breakings were discussed.

Director Economic and Community Development

•**CIP** – SH streetscape noted in '14-'15 CIP is complete. The next project in CIP is the town wide sidewalk project. \$350K is allocated for each of the next four years for this project. The EDC should decide what project they want included in the '19/'20 CIP. **Paul Fadus** asked that since GE has donated a community center, where will the \$15 million go that was allocated to this project previously in the CIP. He asked if the money could be used for FH building demo.

•**Business Visitations / Inquiries /Updates** – **Betsy Paynter** noted that the spring seminar series is done and another series will begin in the fall; a manufacturer's meeting is scheduled for June 4 to bring companies together. The Department of Labor and DECD will also be there; a 'Discover Newtown' sell sheet has been created; there will be another newsletter in June; a website upgrade is planned which should be more user friendly and allow for better mobile access; she has attended networking meetings.

Ms. Stocker noted that they had attended the LC and BOF meetings and will go to BOS next week. Part of the presentation showed that through the BIP, \$15million of investment could take place, producing \$600K of incremental taxes. **Ms. Stocker** noted that she currently manages 9 grants and **Ms. Paynter** is able to help focus on economic development.

•**Brownfields update** – there are nine brownfield sites in town, located on Church Hill Rd., Glen Rd., South Main St. near Monroe, Buttonshop Road, Swamp Road, Fairfield Hills and Prospect Drive. There may be development interest in the SH Auto property. Solar interest has been expressed for the Prospect Drive property.

- EPA Cleanup Grant – Fairfield Hills** – an award was made for the single family house abatement. Work has now stopped as the contractor submitted a change order which would double the cost of the project. Discussion is still taking place with the State regarding disposal techniques for plaster in Danbury Hall.

- M2A zone amendment** – a traffic report was done for warehouse / distribution use of property showing it has the lowest traffic generation of other uses. P&Z did not feel this use was the best use of the property especially with the sewers being installed. **Ms. Stocker** withdrew the application for the M2A zone amendment.

- Hazardous materials assessment grant** – has been awarded to the Town for the buildings at FH.

Ongoing / Old Business Discussions and Actions:

- SHOP** – **Joe Humeston** reported on the last SHOP meeting which included– maintenance of existing sidewalks, activities going forward, SHOP mkt coordinator update, not proceeding with not for profit status for now. SHOP voted to support a recommendation to the EDC to spend up to \$150K from the STEAP Business Assistance grant to extend the sidewalks from Dayton Street to Ardi Court, benefitting 28 residences. **Ms. Stocker** noted that the economic benefit of linking the additional residences was compelling. **Joe Humeston** motioned to approve spending of up to \$150,000 to extend the sidewalk project from Dayton Street to Ardi Court. **Paul Fadus** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. **Ms. Stocker** will ensure whether the contract needs to out to bid.

Joe Humeston motioned to spend \$7,500 to extend the time of the marketing coordinator’s work. **Paul Fadus** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Stocker gave an update from Kim Whitaker at CT Main Street – a final report will be made available with recommendations for Phase II. Phase III will give assistance to Melissa Lopata’s activities in SH.

- Charter Revision** will be discussed next month.

New Business:

- Revenue generating ideas** – **Al Roznicki** presented a comprehensive property tax stabilization plan that would have property tax (houses) paid by using 30 year bonds taken out on houses instead of the current taxation process. He noted financial benefit to both homeowners and the Town. **Ms. Leonard** noted that it was a very interesting proposal that should be further considered and wondered if it was allowed under State law. Further discussion will take place to see if it is legal and feasible. **Mr. Roznicki** submitted the plan to the Director of Finance.

Paul Fadus motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by **Joe Humeston** and passed unanimously. The meeting ended at 3:36 PM.