

The Newtown Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 8, 2014, in Meeting Room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

Present: Chairwoman Jean Leonard; Vice-Chairman Elana Bertram; Martin Gersten; Al Roznicki; Michael Boyle; Matthew Mihalcik

Absent: James Gulalo; Paul Fadus.

Also Present: Elizabeth Stocker, Director Economic and Community Development; Betsy Paynter, Economic Development Coordinator; Pat Llodra, First Selectman (at 2:13 PM)

1) Call to order - Jean Leonard called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

2) Public Participation:

None

3) Minutes of June 10, 2014 regular meeting –

Jean Leonard noted that the minutes from June 10, 2014 should read “**SHOP – Jean Leonard** thanked Joe Humeston for his contributions to the EDC. He is no longer a member since he moved out of town.”

Elana Bertram motioned to accept the amended minutes from the June 10, 2014 meeting. **Martin**

Gersten seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4) Reports / Discussion / Action

EDC Chairwoman Report:

•**Fairfield Hills zoning** –an individual asked for a public forum with a facilitator to discuss the proposed zoning change. There are no funds for a facilitator but an informational meeting and a public hearing will be held.

•**CIP** – No recommendations.

Director of Economic and Community Development Report (Stocker):

•**Business Visitations / Inquiries / Updates – Betsy Paynter** noted that the Newtown.org website will be updated by September and is being done by Sandormax; a 2014-2015 fact sheet is being updated; CPACE mailing will be done to encourage use of the program; a fundamentals of economic development seminar is being offered on November 18 for all town boards; a nursery school meeting will be held in September where nursery school owners will get together to discuss the industry. **Elana Bertram** asked why this segment was being highlighted – it was noted that the environment for the schools has enrollment declining and 12/14 has impacted local after school programs due to SHS being in Monroe. Pop up art displays will fill vacant Sandy Hook storefronts; an electric car charging station is being considered for town.

•**STEAP – Business Assistance-** The sidewalk project from Ardi Ct. to Dayton St. has been awarded to LRM.

•**EPA Cleanup – Fairfield Hills** – the project has been rebid, original contractor terminated. Plaster testing methodology still needs to be officially approved.

·**Tax abatement** – Some bills that were sent out did not properly reflect the approved tax abatement amounts. This will be corrected.

·**Exit 9** – A prospect exists for exit 9.

· **Brownfields update** – A bill has been received for the 10% admin. match for 28 Glen Road (foreclosed for taxes) and Batchelder properties. Money that was set aside for match was spent on needed surveys. The Town wants to do an RFP for the remaining cleanup of Batchelder to get it back to being taxable property.

Michael Boyle asked if the members were supposed to be focusing on particular areas in town. **Liz Stocker** said that members should provide leads from their contacts. Staff can follow up on the leads. **Al Roznicki** provided a summary of duties of EDC members.

Discussion took place regarding 55+ housing and the tax implications. **Michael Boyle** asked about the expense of building at FH. It is primarily due to remediation and reconstruction vs. new construction. Discussion ensued regarding revisiting the \$1 lease proposal for FH. The EDC will revisit this program during the August meeting – materials will be circulated prior to the meeting. Discussion also took place as to whether the BOS could amend the FH Master Plan to include residential.

Ongoing / Old Business:

·**SHOP- Michael Boyle** will follow up with **Joe Humeston** to see what the responsibilities are.

·**Tech Park** – No update.

·**CIP- Pat Llodra** spoke regarding the Community Center and CIP. GE is donating \$15 million to build a building to serve a community purpose. \$5 million will cover costs for approx. 5 years. A condition of this donation is that it is to build something that does not exist (no building rehabilitation or remediation). The project details are still being confirmed. Much work needs to be done by boards, but it may be a 35,000 sq. ft. building with 10K sq. ft. dedicated to senior citizens and 25K sq. ft. dedicated to an aquatic center (two pools – one being zero entry). Center likely to be located at FH. The project is being managed by Public Building and Site and Diversified. This long term project could exist in three phases. #1 being the Community Center #2 MAY be a connector from Community Center to NYA, #3 might be purchasing the NYA. IF this scenario happens, there might be a \$5 million savings in the CIP in the long run, where there had been \$15 million set in the CIP for a Community Center. \$5 million may be able to be saved from the original \$15 million set in the CIP for projects. At this time other projects are not being sought to add to the CIP as much is going on. Buildings at FH need to be removed.

Revenue generation is the goal if the above scenario happens. This is not expected to be a cost neutral project, but it is also not expected to be a cost burden. The Board of Selectmen has initiated a Strategic Plan for Municipal Buildings project which will at some point involve the schools space needs and enrollment study through the BoE. One question to be asked/answered in this planning process is whether it is possible to close one school and maybe repurpose that building to serve a different municipal need.

A math model is being created. Each phase of the Community Center project is being considered independently. Phase #1 is being rolled out and will be complete in 2016.

Ms. Llodra also discussed residential at FH. She believes that the town MAY support mixed use residential on campus, but does not see the town supporting stand alone residential at FH.

·**Sewers** – **Mr. Roznicki** attended a 1 hour meeting of WSA where **Fred Hurley** noted that enough people have signed onto the sewers to make the project a go. The next sewer meeting is on July 10.

·**Business Incubator** – **Elana Bertram** spoke with a marketing director at SHU who sounded interested in finding out more about an incubator. **Ms. Bertram** is waiting to hear back from SHU.

New Business:

- **Strategic Plan** will need updating in the future and will be put on the agenda for next month.
- **Martin Gersten** noted that the commission does not have the budget to do large projects, but should look at things that can be accomplished with limited funds.
- **Revenue generating projects** – **Al Roznicki and Michael Boyle** will be meeting with John Kortze to follow up on the validity of the tax stabilization plan. **Mr. Roznicki** noted the NYS tax free program to encourage businesses to come to NY.

Jean Leonard motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by **Elana Bertram**. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 2:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Christal Preszler