

**The Newtown Economic Development Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 18, 2014, at 3:30 pm in Meeting Room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470**

**Present:** Chairwoman Jean Leonard, Michael Boyle, Bob Rau, Al Roznicki, Vice Chairman Elana Bertram (via speaker phone); **Not Present:** Paul Fadus, James Gulalo, Martin Gersten, Matthew Mihalcik; **Also Present:** George Benson, Director of Planning, Betsy Paynter, Economic Development Coordinator and Tammy Hazen, Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER** – Ms. Leonard called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – Brenda McKinley, Director and Andy Forsyth, Head of Reference Department at the C. H. Booth Library and Atty. Bob Hall.

C. H. Booth Library – Brenda McKinley and Andy Forsyth distributed information and discussed how the library has been chosen as one of 27 CT Libraries to serve as a Virtual Small Business Development Center. It is a three year pilot program jointly coordinated by the U. S. Small Business Administration, the CT Small Business Development Center (CTSBDC), the University of CT and the CT Library Consortium. Other partners in the initiative include SCORE, the Women’s Business Development Council and the Spanish American Merchants Association. The library-based center will provide access via a dedicated laptop to a wide variety of resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Resources include virtual communication with CTSBCD counselors, online business analysis and assessment tools, and social media support. This will be housed in the Reference office and will be available to reserve during specified hours. The center will be up and running in December. There is no limit to the type of industry or service. They will connect with organizations in Newtown. Ms. Paynter offered her support.

Mobil Station Car Wash: Atty. Bob Hall was present to discuss his intentions to complete an application for the business incentive program for a car wash at the Mobil Station on Church Hill Road. He will return with a complete package.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Mr. Roznicki motioned to approve the minutes of October 14, 2014. Mr. Boyle seconded the motion and all were in favor. The minutes were approved as written.

## **REPORTS / DISCUSSION / ACTION**

### **Chairman’s Report**

Fairfield Hills Zone Change Status – Mr. Benson discussed a proposal from a developer of mixed use at Fairfield Hills in the area of Watertown, Newtown and Shelton halls. He said other hospitals in the country that have been renovated offer mixed use and it seems to be the trend. The mixed use would allow apartments above commercial (restaurants/shops/offices). Banks feel having apartments above businesses is more financially viable. There would be approximately 30 to 40 apartments that are

limited to 1,200 sq. ft. (2 bedrooms). Two meetings (hosted by Planning & Zoning, Economic Development, and the Fairfield Hills Authority) are scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> to gather public input. Mr. Benson explained that tax revenue from this can generate funds to help support the campus. It could be a shopping destination, similar to Blue Back Square in West Harford, only on a smaller scale.

Fairfield Hills RFP (\$1 lease) – Mr. Benson discussed the parameters of the \$1/year lease that would work for tenants who want to invest money into the clean-up of a building. The money they invest would be compensated by only being charged \$1 a year until the investment is paid back. Mr. Benson discussed the benefits of seeking matching grants for the funding available in the CIP.

CIP 2014 POCD & EDC 2011 Strategic Plan – Ms. Paynter, Mr. Rau and Ms. Leonard met to discuss the 2011 Strategic Plan which initially was scheduled to be updated in 2016. The Commissioners were asked to review the POCD sections pertaining to EDC and the Strategic Plan and bring three ideas on how to move forward, including what they would like to work on or their interests, to the next meeting. Ms. Paynter said that Zoning and Fairfield Hills Authority should be part of the EDC discussion. Mr. Benson and the commissioners discussed the property off Exit 9 and how to draw business in from more metropolitan areas. Ms. Paynter discussed how the density is spread in Newtown and building up housing in commercial helps this.

### **Coordinator's Report**

EDC Newsletter: Ms. Paynter asked the commissioners for feedback or suggestions for the EDC Newsletter.

The Fundamentals of Economic Development Meeting was cancelled but rescheduled for January 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at C. H. Booth Library in the Meeting Room. CERC will provide research on Newtown.

C-Pace Marketing Grant: EDC hosted a C-Pace meeting at Tier One on October 28<sup>th</sup> for Newtown Commercial building owners. Curtis Packaging and Wind Corp. are processing applications for energy upgrades.

Newtown.org Website Upgrade: The new tagline for the EDC website will be "Live, Work, Grow with us." The website is scheduled to launch in early 2015.

CGI Video Tour Upgrade: The Town website has a link to the EDC's website with a new video launching in May 2015.

Commerce Road Corporate Park Sign: Ms. Paynter is working with the business owners to get this directory sign updated.

Cultural Arts Groups in Newtown: Ms. Paynter met with the Cultural Arts of Western CT to discuss how the arts and economic development can work together.

Innovation Center in Danbury: Ms. Bertram discussed a meeting and tour of the new Innovation Center in Danbury. A great deal of information was gathered including funding, educational events,

infrastructure, etc. A great amount of information was collected. There may be a follow-up meeting regarding Grants that helped the Danbury center. Sacred Heart University cannot partner with Newtown for an incubator study as they already have a similar program.

Grant Applications:

- \$450,000 STEAP Grant (Fairfield hills Streetscape)
- \$200,000 EPA Grant (28a Glen Road, Phase III of clean-up)
- \$200,000 EPA Grant (48 Mile Hill Road, Shelton House, Building Remediation)
- \$10,000 CT Main Street – Signs and wayfinding consultant to determine signage needed to find, park and maneuver within Sandy Hook Village)
- VCOG Grant (7 Glen Road, unknown amount, hazardous building materials assessment for hopes to get EPA funding for clean up next year)

**NEW BUSINESS / ACTIONS**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 pm, Ms. Bertram seconded the motion and all were in favor.