



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK Economic Development Commission

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EDC Minutes Special Meeting February 20, 2014

Present: John Decristoforo, David Cole, Bruce Greenfield, Jim Keating, Liz Swenson and Susan Beckman

Absent: Lauren Ashe, Carol Conklin, Maura Richards and Todd Roberts

- 1) The meeting was called to order by Chairman Swenson at 7:05 P.M.
- 2) On a motion (Cole/Keating) the Minutes from January 9, 2014 were accepted unanimously.
- 3) Comments from the Public and Correspondence - none
- 4) Introduction of Guests - none
- 5) Old Business: Attracting High-Tech Business to Old Saybrook – follow-up on Dr. Shearer's presentation.
 - a) As suggested by Dr. Shearer Executive Director Beckman met with Susan Froshauer CEO of CURE (Connecticut United for Research Excellence) the bio science cluster of Connecticut, a diverse network of small and large life and health care sciences companies, universities, scientists, educators, students, entrepreneurs, mentors, business experts and investors. The gist of the conversation was about the need for co-working spaces which are not the traditional "incubator" spaces. These co-working spaces are privately operated and offer memberships to small or start-up businesses (often with only 1 employee) at varying rates for varying amounts of time from a couple of hours per week to full-time offices with "anchor tenants". The successful co-working spaces create a culture of business support with opportunities to share information, network and build business.
 - b) Susan also met with two people interested in opening a co-working space in this area. They like Old Saybrook and the proximity to the train station, intersection of Rt9 and I-95. They are trying to find an interesting building with competitive lease rates and the ability to expand in the future.
 - c) She also spoke with the Connecticut Incubator Network (CIN) Coordinator from the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc. He provided some information about what incubator spaces typically offer in the state and said there are a number of towns with incubator spaces that are empty and looking for tenants, incubator spaces are not necessarily a good step for Old Saybrook.
- 6) New Business
 - a) EDC Membership & Officer Elections– create a Nominating Committee to identify and nominate officers for election at the March 2014 meeting
 - i) A nominating committee consisting of Commissioners Cole and Greenfield was commissioned to propose a new slate of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary at our March meeting.
 - ii) Chairman Swenson performed an analysis of attendance at our monthly meetings. Two Commissioners, Richards and Roberts, have missed most meetings. In conversations with First Selectman Fortuna it appears both will resign. Several candidates were discussed. Consistent with traditional practice it was decided to have Executive Director Susan Beckman advertise the openings in the press and Commissioners Greenfield and Keating will notify the Political Town Managers. Again consistent with traditional practice the EDC will probably recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Alternate Commissioner Carol Conklin be elevated to Commissioner and one Alternate and one full Commissioner be appointed.
 - b) Mullin Associates Report Review

- i) Executive Director Beckman prepared an analysis of the Mullin Report from 2002 and identified 23 different recommendations for us to decide on appropriate actions. The Commissioners will review the spreadsheet and come to our March 13th meeting prepared to make those decisions.
 - c) Mariner's Way – Discussion of EDC's possible role in leading implementation
 - i) Chairman Swenson proposed a motion the EDC take a leadership role in Implementation of the Mariner's Way project. After discussion it was decided to postpone the discussion and vote on the motion until after the Mullin Report review at our next meeting..
- 7) Executive Director's Report
- Executive Director Beckman distributed an extensive written report. In addition she touched on the following topics.
- a) The YTD Budget and Plans were reviewed
 - b) With Susan's leadership the State DECD is conducting an Economic Development Workshop March 26, 6:30-8:30pm for all interested parties in Old Saybrook.
 - c) Susan is working with Chris Costa of the town Land Use Department to create a Business Packet for distribution to those who are interested in opening a business in town. It will be in two parts, the first promoting Old Saybrook, the second identifying a roadmap of the approval process.
 - d) She is exploring Old Saybrook membership in another organization – CT Main Street Center
 - e) Previously the EDC approved expenditures to print another batch of our "Rack Cards" Early this summer Susan proposes creating a "Post Card Mailing" to all businesses in town to reintroduce the EDC and support the "retention " aspect of our mission.
 - f) Susan also met with Kurt Wittek, current owner of the Donnelly building, and discussed his plans. The Donnelley Property currently has a substantial vacancy and she is exploring listing it on the CERC site.
 - g) Bob Fish, Town Treasurer and Conservation Commissioner met with Susan to discuss the Preserve. We will invite him to our next meeting.
 - h) An investor, Anthony Izzo of AFI Inc. of Southport is negotiating to buy the North Cove Outfitter building.
 - i) AutoZone has bought Car Quest and will consolidate the Main Street store into the Post Road (Blockbuster) building
- 8) Comments from Chairman Swenson
- a) It has been suggested that the EDC should hire a clerk to prepare our minutes. It seems we are the only commission that does not employ a clerk. The annual cost would be about \$800. Chairman Swenson will pursue this.
- 9) On a motion (Greenfield/Cole) the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Swenson at 8:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,



James D. Keating – Secretary