

Town of Stonington  
Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting  
April 21, 2011

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Blunt White at 7 PM. Present were Blunt White, Ed Hart until 8 PM, Paul Burgess, Wendy Bury, and Amy Arruda. First Selectman Ed Haberek and Edward Dear (former EDC member) also attended. Absent were Dan Barber, Dan Olivero, Ed Planeta, Nat Arata, Peter Glankoff, and Robynne Madison.

The minutes of the March 17, 2011 meeting were accepted with one grammatical change. Motion by Blunt White second by Paul Burgess.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **EDC Web Site**

Ed Hart raised the issue regarding the effectiveness of the website. General discussion followed. Ed Haberek has changes planned that will be discussed at the next meeting.

##### **Signage Regulations**

P&Z scheduled to consider proposed amendments at next meeting.

##### **Solutions for Stonington**

Ed Haberek provided an update on the plans for the event schedule for May 24 7:30-10 AM at Mystic Hilton. Panel discussion participants being finalized.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) planning process administered by The US Dept of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) was discussed. Blunt White and Ed Dear provided an overview of the program. Towns submit specific planning or infrastructure projects to the regional planning agency for evaluation and ranking, which then are submitted to EDA for further consideration and potential funding. On a motion by Blunt White, second by Paul Burgess, projects on the 2006 list will be resubmitted, with some revisions, Motion passed with Ed Hart voting against. Additional projects added to the list include planning for growth in the commercial fishing industry, planning study for the Pawcatuck/Westerly downtown area,

planning and infrastructure improvement for the Taugwonk Road industrial area. The Stonington CEDS projects are being finalized and will be attached later to the approved minutes.

Mr. Haberek provided an update of economic development projects in the town.

This meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Burgess, Acting Secretary

Minutes of April 21, 2011 meeting approved at May 19, 2011  
EDC Meeting

Blackwell  
Chairman EDC

**White, G.W.Blunt**

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**From:** White, G.W.Blunt  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2011 12:19 PM  
**To:** Deborah Donavan  
**Cc:** ehaberek@stonington-ct.gov; Glee McAnanly (gleeban@aol.com); 'George Crouse (shstennis1@aol.com)'; Ed Dear; William Haase; 'Keith Brynes'; Amy Arruada (auarruda@washtrust.com); Dan Barber; Dan Oliverio; Ed Hart; Ed Planeta; Nat Arata; Paul Burgess; Peter Glankoff (pglankoff@mysticaquarium.org); Robynne Madison (rmadison2@csc.com); Wendy Bury; White, G.w.blunt  
**Subject:** CEDS planning chart - Draft  
**Attachments:** CEDS - Stonington Opportunities - DRAFT 4-26-2011.doc

Hi Debbie – EDC and First Selectman Haberek reviewed the Draft CEDs planning chart at EDC meeting last week. Attached are our revisions (marked draft).

Regarding Stonington's five CED projects from the 2006 list, it is our recommendation that Project 1 (Riverfront Mill Site Reuse Initiative) and Project 2 (Pawcatuck Greenway Project) be removed from the list. Some elements of both of these Initiatives are included for your consideration in the attached planning chart.

We feel the remaining CED projects should be on the new list, Project #4 South Pier Fishing Dock Extension, Project #3 Mystic Transportation Center, Project #5 Underground utilities in Stonington Borough. Note the attached file contains updates for projects 3 and 4. Let me know if you need additional information.

Thank you,  
Blunt

Blunt White  
4 Broadway, RC 869  
Norwich, CT 06360  
Phone 860-572-5095  
Fax 860-886-6588  
Email gw-blunt.white@peoples.com

6/22/2011

## **CEDS – Community Economic Development Strategies**

### **Town of Stonington 4-26-2011 DRAFT**

#### **ISSUES:**

Taugwonk Road light industrial zone (abuts RT 95 at exit 91, 175 acres) needs to be connected to water and sewer to become fully usable (current use residential, consisting of 3 homes that predate zoning, non conforming use, can not be expanded). Utility connection point is 1 mile away. Vacant residential land could be added to increase industrial zone; proximity to Exit 91 is excellent.

Active commercial fishing and lobster fleet (spin off business - ship repairs, fish wholesale businesses) is being negatively impacted by new and more onerous Federal and State fishery regulations.

Privately owned local company (Yardney) with 150 employees is moving to RI, formerly leased its location (200,000 sf, old mill) to be vacant within 1 year. Mill site will be in transition, owner open to ideas, possible significant clean up costs.

Mystic Mobility Planning Study completed in 2010 with Congressional earmark of \$500,000. An additional \$2,000,000 available to implement but requires a 20% local match. Local funding options need to be developed or the earmark will eventually be lost.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

A local private investor with significant financial resources (Forbes 400) has acquired over 10% of downtown Westerly RI and is planning a significant redevelopment (abuts Stonington/Pawcatuck). A seasonal covered ice rink has been approved to be built in the fall of 2011. Stonington needs funds for a planning study to determine zoning changes to maximize economic spillover. This would be a joint initiative with the Town of Westerly (funding for Westerly's portion would likely be private).

Low tax mill rate. Recent new construction includes a LaQuinta hotel and Tractor Supply store. An underused, old mill site (70,000 sf) is being renovated for office use for Zachry Nuclear (upgraded to an engineering technical center) relocating from Groton (outgrew).

Industrial site (raw land) recently approved for a 38,000 sf building actively being considered for purchase by a locally owned company that leases in Westerly RI (outgrown current location).

Vacant industrial land (20 acres, with water and sewer) recently advertised for sale along RT 95 (highway retail section of Mystic) is not suited for industrial use (price is too high due to abutting retail use). Owner would like to rezone to general commercial (increase permitted uses).

Skilled local work force with a good work ethic.

Lightly developed (under 20,000 in population) located along the shore, close to transportation (95 and Amtrak).

### **BARRIERS TO GROWTH:**

Current State economic policies - deficit spending, deficit pension obligations, increasing taxation and onerous permitting process.

Onerous local permitting process.

Existing major employers interested in leaving the State (not growing in CT).

General cost of doing business in CT is higher than other states.

Lack of *usable* industrially zoned land.

### **PLACE IN REGION:**

Principal economic engines are tourism, submarine construction, casinos, pharmaceutical research -- location of Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium.

Small shoreline bedroom community with a tilt to middle and upper income, portions of town have higher value second homes.

### **PROJECTS:**

Town Plan of Conservation and Development must be rewritten before 2014. Funding sources for planning are limited by local budget, need to find outside funding assistance.

Planning initiative needed for Taugwonk Road light industrial zone.

Joint planning initiative between Stonington (CT) and Westerly (RI) needed to update Stonington zoning regulations with the private economic revitalization occurring in downtown Westerly.

Planning initiative is needed to grow commercial fisheries (aquaculture?) – Existing infrastructure (docks) and businesses (fishing fleet, fish wholesalers) that make use of Stonington’s proximity to fishing grounds and clean local waters could be lost.

**MAJOR EMPLOYERS:**

Davis Standard – heavy machine manufacturer

Stoneridge Independent Living Retirement Community – age restricted adult community

Acme Wire Products – custom wire fabrication

Cable Components – high tech plastic components for wiring applications

Monsanto – plant bio pharma research

Mystic Seaport - Tourism

Mystic Aquarium - Tourism