

**Meeting Minutes
Economic Development Commission
September 15, 2011
7:00pm Human Services Building**

Attendees: Blunt White, Ed Planeta, Ed Hart, Amy Arruda, Wendy Bury, Paul Burgess, Robynne Madison
Guests: Ed Haberek

Call to order: 7:00pm

Approval of prior Minutes: (dated June 29, 2011) **Motion:** Chairman White
Second: Paul Burgess

Chairman White opened the discussions with a request to approve the FY12 meeting schedule for the EDC to comply with FOI requirements. The proposed meeting time was a continuation of previous year's scheduled, the third Thursday of each month at 7:00pm. The location would also remain the same at the Human Services Building.

Motion to Approve: Chairman White
Second: Paul Burgess

Prior to the start of discussions outlined on the agenda and as part of an open forum, the Open House hosted by Zachary Corp. earlier in the day was discussed. Several committee members attended the event and commented at what a great job the company did renovating the building atop of Lords Hill, and how well spoken the presenters were, specifically noting the potential of Zachary bring additional jobs to the site. In addition to locations in Charlotte, SC and Chicago, Zachary has relocated its Groton office to the Lords Hill location.

The tax abatement process and actual abatement granted to Zachary was also discussed. The intent was to ensure that all committee members were aware of how the process worked, enticed and benefited businesses looking to do business in Stonington.

Under **Old Business**, the EDC website analytics were discussed. Special attention was paid to the metrics around key word searches. Key word searches are at this point the most critical piece of data the EDC has to work with in order to determine how to attract more visitors to the site. Knowing what people are searching for the most would allow the EDC to be sure to post that type of information on the website. As the information is provided as requested, the content of the site will become more and more useful to prospective businesses and visitors as a whole. Additionally, analytical measures will be more useful to the EDC members and will help guide the decision making process on what to include on the website.

Member Amy Arruda also suggested the possible inclusion of a "QR" code on the Town business cards linking card holders to the EDC website with a simple scan of the code with their Smartphone.

Member Wendy Bury gave an update on the **Not for Profit Roundtable**. The roundtable committee has launched the effort of a Not for Profit Study aimed at providing a comprehensive accounting of the NP's in the area and the impact of their contributions to the community. The upcoming meeting of the Roundtable will host Rep. Diana Urban who will be presenting on the topic of Results Based Accountability.

Wendy also noted that it was a decision of the Roundtable, albeit an informal group, to comply with FOI requirements and keep the public informed of their activities.

Under **Business Outreach**, member Ed Planeta provided an update on the current status of the discussions with Eagle Electric and their potential relocation from Westery to Stonington. Eagle Electric is currently looking for a larger facility given the recent growth experienced by the company.

First Selectman Haberek provided the committee with an update on discussions he has been engaged in concerning potential businesses or business site opportunities within the Town. There has been a lot of activity at the Coogan property in Mystic, where a Childcare Facility is currently being constructed. There is also the potential for a Healthcare / affordable assisted living facility to be located there or in the Mystic area as the company is exploring the available opportunities.

Other businesses looking at the property also include a Chicago based retail business.

Selectman Haberek noted that there is also another Healthcare based business looking at the Aquarium property as a potential location. He also mentioned a new business that has committed to doing business in Stonington, Jenesis Surgical, located just at the entrance of the Davis Standard complex.

Property up for sale and potential development opportunity is the former "Nest" location at the Masons Island light.

Comment/discussion occurred around the progress made on the Twenty-Third Publications cite and what a beautiful job they have done to develop that property as well as the potential future development opportunities with the adjacent marina.

While questioned, no update in status was available on the Buxton proposal for affordable housing units next to the Rutmans building.

Quick updates were given regarding the status of discussions with the old Stop & Shop site owners, the Campbell Grain building impacted by hurricane Irene as well as actions taken concerning the CT Castings building and 71 Mechanic Street.

No updates regarding the **Regional and local tourism marketing agenda item.**

No updates regarding the **Signage regulations agenda item.**

No updates regarding the **Planning for 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development agenda item.**

Under **New Business**, an informal group of EDC members met over the summer break and began exploring the potential for a business guide to be published by the EDC which would assist potential business owners in starting up a new business or relocating their business to Stonington. The Guide was draft was presented to the EDC by member Amy Arruda. Explaining the objectives of the Guide and path forward to continue developing the content of the Guide, Amy asked that each member review either the printed copies provided to attending members or the electronic copies sent to all members by the next meeting and provide feedback regarding additional inclusions, exclusions, modifications etc. so as to be sure everyone has input to the project and that it meets all the necessary requirements a new business owner should be aware of in order to do business in Stonington successfully.

Selectman Haberek took the action to solicit input from each of his department heads asking them to provide a write up of the requirements their respective departments require from a new business owner to be properly registered and compliant with Town Regulations.

Lastly, Chairman White mentioned the vacancy of positions on the P&Z Committee and urged the members of the EDC to consider perhaps filling those vacancies or mentioning the positions to qualified individuals.

Meeting Adjournment: 8:45pm

Approved 10/25/2011
Blair White
Chairman