

**Town of Stonington  
Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes for April 12, 2012  
Human Services Building 7:00pm**

**Attendance:** Blunt White, Robynne Madison, Paul Burgess, Amy Arruda, Ed Hart, Wendy Bury, Ed Planeta, Peter Glankoff

**Call to Order:** 7:05pm

**Approval of Prior Minutes:** March 8, 2012  
Motion: Blunt White  
Second: Paul Burgess

**Old Business:**

**Business Guide** – both the Westerly Sun and The Day published articles noting the availability of the EDC's Business Guide on the EDC website and that feedback regarding accessibility, content and ease of use was welcomed by the EDC. A review of the traffic on the site did reveal that several people did take note of the article and visited the document. No feedback submissions were made.

**EDC Website** – member Bury provided the monthly statistics on the website traffic noting that the number of visits nearly doubled this month at 96. Most of the site visits originated from the Town's website.

Key topics researched were:

- Mystic offices for lease
- Taugwonk Road
- Building lots

Member Glankoff proposed the idea of providing links to either the MLS or local real estate agencies. It was determined that the MLS would be the preferred link so as not to promote the services of any particular agency.

The Commission also discussed changing the content of the website to feature recent news articles referencing business development in Stonington. The current feature article is on Zachary and should now be brought up to date by featuring both Mystic Senior Center and Spruce Meadows.

**Business Outreach** - member Burgess provided an update on a recent meeting with member White, along with Selectman Haberek with Ron Kisner Esq. a consultant hired by Meggitt Co. the current owner of the space leased by Yardney (250,000 sf of mill space, zoned M1 at 82 Mechanic Street). Kisner is in charge of winding up the lease with Yardney a determining a new leasing plan. After the meeting Burgess took Kisner on a tour that included the Velvet Mill and Stonington Commons.

**Regional & Local Tourism** – member Glankoff provided the commission members with an extensive overview of challenges the tourism industry is facing in terms of drawing visitors to Stonington beyond the typical day tripper and ensuring repeat visits as well as the uncertainty of the pending decision by the State on its overall marketing strategy which could force a change in the mission and vision of the Greater Mystic Visitor Bureau (GMVB). The discussion touched upon what could help promote visitations to Stonington, the creation of a redesigned point of entry for passerby's from interstate 95. The overlook on 95 is a beautiful set up for what lies ahead at the next off ramp but it is quickly diffused by unattractive, confusing interchanges of roadways and overgrown brush.

Member Glankoff appealed to the commission to consider taking a position on what the EDC views as ideal tourism for the Town – What tourism should be and what do we want to see in Stonington, and work towards establishing a mission and objective to promote that type of tourism.

The suggestion was well received by the commission members who all agreed to being discussing potential opportunities.

**POCD Update** – In conjunction with the above discussion on tourism, it was suggested that tourism be addressed in the upcoming POCD planning sessions and considered for inclusion to the 2014 amended POCD.

**Action Update- Previous Months New Business - N/A**

**New Business:**

Les Bray attended the EDC meeting as a potential new commissioner. Les provided the commission an overview of his background, experience in the real estate business as well as providing an example of the work he is doing as part of his new business venture Sound Investment Consulting.

**Review of EDC Website Provider Proposals** – Member Bury is leading the review and has requested/received proposals from 4 local providers of website services. The site's current provider did not respond to the request. A decision is scheduled for the next monthly meeting. Dory Clay of Interactive Design submitted a proposal and attended the meeting, Dory addressed the commission, highlighting her work experience and interest.

**82 Mechanic Street – Yardney location, M1 zoning.** Discussion regarding the limitations placed upon a business considering locating within a M1 zone. Permitted and Special Permit uses in M1 are currently very narrowly defined. This makes it very difficult to lease, especially to smaller commercial uses not currently allowed in M1 (for example a fitness center or indoor tennis).

**M1 Zoning Text Amendment** - pursuant to the above discussion regarding and particularly the Yardney location (82 Mechanic Street), the Commission discussed an initiative to propose text changes broadening allowed uses. The prospect of finding a manufacturer or office user for the 250,000 sf formerly occupied by Yardney is considered low. At the next meeting EDC members will consider formats for determining and presenting its position on this subject.

**Adjournment:** 9:11pm

Approved 5/10/2012

Blair White, Charmac Stonington EDC