

**Town of Stonington  
Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes for May 10, 2012  
Human Services Building 7:00pm**

**Attendance:** Paul Burgess, acting Chairman, Amy Arruda, Ed Hart, Wendy Bury, Robynne Madison  
**Absent:** Blunt White, Chairman, Ed Planeta, Dan Olivero, Peter Glankoff, Nat Arata  
**Secretary:** Robynne Madison  
**Call to Order:** 7:05pm

**Approval of Prior Minutes:** April 12, 2012

Motion: Paul Burgess  
Second: Wendy Bury

*Motion was also made by Ed Hart to amend the wording under New Business, Review of EDC Website Provider Proposals from "four bids received to four bids requested"*

**Old Business:** Acting Chairman Burgess made motion to change the order of the agenda for this evenings meeting to allow the presenters in attendance to present their topics prior to the EDC working through their agenda items. All members approved the motion.

**Business Guide** – As a result of the recent newspaper publicity announcing the availability of the business guide, there has been a significant increase in traffic to the website and guide. This increase in activity, 186 hits in one month, has proven to be tool that is both needed and welcomed in the town.

**EDC Website** – Commissioner Arruda reviewed the proposals received for website administration, maintenance and hosting. After a thorough review and comparison Commissioner Arruda recommended that the most cost effective means for the EDC would be for the commission to tap into the talent of the commission members and maintain the site ourselves while enlisting the support services only of CMB who is currently providing our support services and hosting via a third party agent.

The Commission did review the proposals as well citing concerns about our ability to maintain the site. The Commission determined that through the formation of a website committee, consisting of members that have maintained sites of their own would provide the needed structure for the effort. Plan B was also discussed, which was, in the event the EDC was unable to continue to the support of the site themselves, we could easily revert back to CMB as being the sole provider of support and administration.

The cost to convert the site from the existing arrangement, utilizing a third party, would be a one-time fee of \$700. After that, monthly maintenance fees would be \$0 unless the Commission needed actual modifications done to the site such as design changes and expansion to include additional pages etc. The current annual spend is approximately \$2,300.

Motion to Approve Recommendation : Wendy Bury  
Second: Robynne Madison  
Abstain: Ed Hart

**Business Outreach** - Commissioner Bury provided an update on the support she has been providing the owner of the American Velvet Mill regarding the preparation of a zoning amendment application asking for 3 special use permits from the Borough P&Z, retail/commercial, professional services and class 1 restaurant. Commissioner Bury and the owner of the Mill did present to the P&Z

board at their last meeting. Any action to be taken was tabled to the next meeting pending suggested changes to the application and hearing of concerns from Mill neighbors.

### **Regional & Local Tourism – N/A**

**POCD Update** – Discussion regarding the potential changing of M1 zoning restrictions could be viable for update within the POCD document. The belief is that any decision regarding any activities to move forward with an amendment change is contingent upon the outcome of the zoning decision on the Velvet Mill property.

### ***Action Update- Previous Months New Business***

Review of EDC Website Provider Proposals – covered under EDC Website.

M1 Zoning Amendment – covered under POCD Update

82 Mechanic Street – Yardney location, M1 zoning – covered under POCD Update

### **New Business:**

#### **Presentation by Peg Moran – Stonington Agricultural Report**

Peg Moran is a flower farmer here in Stonington. She is soliciting the support of the EDC regarding agriculture as a viable economic industry in Stonington and embracing the movement towards local food distribution and sustainability. Given the upcoming opportunity for the Towns commissions to make amendments to the 2014 POCD, the consideration and subsequent inclusion of agriculture as a key industry in Stonington would not only allow for the protection of valuable land from potential development, but also embrace the effort become a sustainable community.

Peg also talked to the commission about CLUCK, **Chicken Lovers Urge Change** quickly. CLUCK was formed by chicken lovers in Stonington who are seeking a "zoning text amendment" to the current ordinance.

"The Town of Stonington's current ordinance does not allow residents to raise chickens on residential lots smaller than three acres. The current ordinance also restricts the number of chickens to only two animals. In effect, the Town classifies chickens as 'grazing animals' and groups them in the same category as horses, cows, sheep and goats.

CLUCK seeks to change the current ordinance to grant an exception to hens. We want small, home-based flocks up to six hens, no roosters, which have a fenced area with a coup to be legal in Stonington. "

#### **Co-Presentation by Pierce Hall, Summit street Development, LLC and Dr. Dennis Flanagan, Groton Dental.**

Pierce Hall, developer presented to the EDC the proposed plan for the construction of a dental office at the entrance of the Mystic Branch of the YMCA on Harry Austin Drive. (off Mason's Island Road). Dr. Dennis Flanagan, owner of Groton Dental and resident of Mason's Island, would be purchasing the building from Summit Street Development, LLC upon completion and will be combining his practice and the practice of another local dental practice currently facing zoning restrictions at their current location preventing them from growing their practice further. The combining of the two practices will allow for growth of both businesses as well as bring Dr. Flanagan's business to Stonington from Groton.

The building plan, designed by Patrick Walsh of Westerly, RI, has been reviewed by the Architecture Review Board and with the suggested modifications made to the plan, will result in a aesthetically pleasing, near 5,000 sqft 'single story' building. There is a second story 'storage' area on the plan, however this is not viable office space. The roof line was modified to ease the harshness of a single level building of this size. There will also be 36 parking spaces surrounding the building, which would potentially be used as overflow parking for events held by the YMCA. Discussions have taken place to work towards a potential agreement on the matter. The YMCA had owned the property prior to selling it to Summit Development. Drainage issues are of a concern on the property, but are being engineered to address the problem of water flow directly into the YMCA property.

The EDC withheld their endorsement of the project until the next scheduled EDC meeting at which time the project can be further discussed with absent members of the commission that are actively involved with the YMCA and could provide valuable insight as to the concerns of neighboring properties.

**Budget Items** – topic tabled until further discussion can be had with the full commission present in order to fully understand all expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year and to best determine the necessity of continued support of local Chambers.

Motion to Table: Paul Burgess  
Second: Robynne Madison

**Adjournment:** 8:44pm

Approved 6/14/2012  
Blair White  
Chairman