

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Economic Development and Improvement Commission acceptance.]

Town of Wethersfield
Economic Development & Improvement Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2007 - 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Chair Rosania called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.
2. Attendance and Quorum (6 members required)

Members in attendance: Chair Betty Rosania, Brian Silver, Ralph Keleher, Paul Montinieri, Ken Rizzio, Chris Lyons, Joe Cornelio, Doug Sacks, Joan Hughes, Bill Knapp and Howard Greenblatt.

Members absent: Frank Frago

Also in attendance: Bonnie Therrien - Town Manager, Phil Knecht - Planning and Zoning Commission Liaison, Peter Gillespie - Director of Planning and Economic Development and Denise Bradley - Assistant Planner.

3. Old Business
 - a. Election of Interim Chairman and Vice-Chair - Joan Hughes made a motion to elect Howard Greenblatt as the Interim Chairman and Doug Sacks as the Interim Vice-Chair. Bill Knapp seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
 - b. Silas Deane Highway Revitalization Status - Bonnie Therrien noted that the proposal is currently being reviewed by the Department of Transportation (DOT). Any DOT response/comments should be expected in approximately 8-10 weeks then the project will be put out to bid. Peter Gillespie noted that there is funding available to replace some of the bus shelters and that Rocky Hill has expressed interest in participating and would like to use the style shelters presented by Fuss & O'Neil in the Silas Deane Highway Master Plan. Mr. Gillespie noted that the style specified in that plan consists of a green metal frame and glass. He questioned how many shelters would ultimately be funded. Chair Rosania asked if there are any other design options that might be more durable, less expensive and exhibits better style. Peter Gillespie noted that DeCarlo & Doll have presented several additional options for review.
 - c. Marketing and PR Assistance - Keiler - Peter Gillespie reported that while nothing had been formally submitted in writing, Keiler has been provided with all previous marketing and public relations initiatives. He noted that initial comments will be expected in approximately 2 weeks.
 - d. Website Update Status - Peter Gillespie presented the EDIC with the proposed website design changes. The proposal has been forwarded to Tom Hemphill, the town's Information Specialist, for his technical comments. Mr. Gillespie noted that Keiler has been tasked with the design of the website and not its population and restructure. Chair Rosania questioned the timeframe of having the redesigned website up and running. Bonnie Therrien noted that even after Keiler has completed the design, a lag in the population and restructuring of the website should be expected due to a back log in Data Services.

4. New Business

- a. Review of 2001 Economic Development Strategic Plan - Peter Gillespie noted that the new members of the EDIC need to be aware of the existence of this document and the programs that have come out of it. Mr. Gillespie stated that the recommendations should be looked at and graded by what initiatives have and have not been completed. Paul Montinieri noted that many of the initiatives have been addressed and then stressed the need to cite the specific examples of success. Howard Greenblatt agreed that the plan should be re-evaluated and prioritized to advance it even further. Peter Gillespie suggested creating a live document in which progress can be tallied and taking the plan to the subcommittee's for evaluation.
- b. Double A Transportation Shuttle - There was nothing reported on this matter.
- c. Silas Deane Highway Façade Program - Peter Gillespie reported that he has received inquiries from approximately eight prospective applicants with projects that range significantly in scale and cost. He noted that the details of the applications would be discussed at the next Financial Strategies Subcommittee meeting. Bonnie Therrien discussed the logistics and cost of having an outside firm, such as the Hartford Economic Development Corporation (HEDCo), assume an administrative role in managing the program. A brief discussion ensued in which it was noted that a good practice in community relations would be to maintain the responsibility in house.
- d. Wethersfield Business Loan Program - Ken Rizzio discussed converting the program from a loan to a grant. Peter Gillespie reported that he has not received much interest in the loan program noting that of three initial applications, only one (1) loan, to Ascot Catering, has closed. A brief discussion ensued and Chris Lyons made a motion to maintain the terms of the existing loan as is and to change the loan program to a grant program. Bill Knapp seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- e. Preserve America - Bonnie Therrien noted that a kickoff meeting will be held on January 11th at 5:30 p.m. at the Keeney Center.
- f. Redevelopment Agency - Bonnie Therrien reported that the Redevelopment Agency is seeking an EDIC liaison. She noted that the Agency is working on their Mission Statement and will meet again on January 17th.
- g. Salute To Business Event - Peter Gillespie reported that he has received positive feedback regarding the event and that approximately 130-140 people attended. Mr. Gillespie noted that a major financial contribution from the Chamber of Commerce could no longer be counted on.
- h. Business Visitation Program - Peter Gillespie reported that he would be conducting visitations based on some of the responses to the Business Survey in which several businesses requested a follow up visit.
- i. Budget 2007/2008 - Peter Gillespie noted that all budget requests should be finalized and returned to the Town Manager by January 26th.

5. Reports of the Town Manager -

Town Manager's Report - Bonnie Therrien reported on the following:

- Progress made on the Blight List.
- A decrease in the Grand List of \$200,000-400,000 due to the loss of Northeast Utilities.

Town Council Liaison's Report - Paul Montinieri reported that Andy Adil has been appointed to serve as the Mayor of Wethersfield.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report - Phil Knecht reported on the events of the January 3rd meeting.

Tourism Commission Liaison's Report - Paul Montinieri noted that he would like to remain the Tourism Commission Liaison.

Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report - Peter Gillespie noted that Town of Wethersfield will host its 1st Quarterly Land Use Committee Meeting on Tuesday January 30, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in Room F3 of the Nature Center located at 156 Prospect Street. The Land Use Boards

will meet to discuss what projects everyone is working on and receive an update on the Redevelopment Agency, Preserve America project, and the Silas Deane Highway renovations.

Chairman's Report - Chair Rosania noted that the new coffee shop on Beaver Road (The Black Cup) has WiFi capabilities.

6. Sub-Committee Reports -

Marketing and Communications - Doug Sacks showed the EDIC the slideshow presentation that is to be shown at the CT Convention Planning Bureau luncheon.

Financial Strategies - A meeting was set for Thursday January 18th at 4:00 p.m.

7. Minutes- Approval of [November 2006 meeting minutes](#) - Bill Knapp made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Doug Sacks seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

8. Next Meeting - February 8, 2007

9. Correspondence - A letter dated December 19, 2006, from Lyle Wray, Executive Director of CRCOG regarding the 2007-08 Proposed Local Assessments for MetroHartford Alliance.

10. Adjournment - Bill Knapp made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:42 p.m. Howard Greenblatt seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner