

Town of Wethersfield
Economic Development & Improvement Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 9, 2006 - 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Chair Rosania called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.
2. Attendance - Members in attendance: Chair Betty Rosania, Joe Cornelio, Ralph Kelleher, Chris Lyons, Kate Mullen, Joan Hughes, Howard Greenblatt, Doug Sacks, Ken Rizzio, Paul Montinieri and Cindy Jacobs.

Members absent: Frank Frago, John Breglio, and Tom Grottke.

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

3. Old Business

- a. Farmer's Market Status - Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that Chris Shepard` of the Wethersfield Nature Center has received negative feedback from many of the local farmer's who are not interested in participating in a Farmer's Market. Commissioner Lyons questioned who would participate if the locals farmer's do not. Ms. Therrien noted that most of the more successful farmer's markets reach out to local area farmers. Commissioner Cornelio mentioned that students from the High School may be able to get involved. Ms. Therrien commented that it would be hard to get a solid commitment from the students especially in the summer months but also noted that the school does have a horticulture program. Chair Rosania noted that cooperation at all levels should be encouraged and fostered. Phil Knecht noted that the Wethersfield Garden Club might also want to be involved. Commissioner Hughes added that the 4-H Club could also participate.
- b. Silas Deane Highway Plan - Peter Gillespie noted that Fuss & O'Neill are due to deliver the draft plan as soon as next week. He added that the brand and image concept received would not be distributed because it was unsatisfactory. Mr. Gillespie explained that the meeting scheduled for February 21st conflicts with the Planning & Zoning meeting and will be rescheduled.
- c. Salute To Business - 2006 Date - Peter Gillespie requested a vote from the Commission on which date to hold the event so he could begin to formalizing the arraignments with the Wethersfield Country Club. The choices in dates were Wednesday, December 6th or Thursday, December 7th. Commissioner Sacks made a motion to hold the event on Wednesday December 6th. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
- d. RFP Marketing Assistance/Tourism Commission - Peter Gillespie reported that six proposals have been received and that all the firms are from Connecticut. He discussed the intent to narrow the field down to two or three firms to be interviewed. Bonnie Therrien ranked the competing firms as follows; Magee, Baldwin, Anagnostics, Keiler, Vanguard and Andrea Obston. Chair Rosania favored Magee because it is a local firm with experience. She described Baldwin as being a stretch for 2nd but that it has an impressive clientele and experience. Chair Rosania felt Vanguard was outside the targeted price range. She also noted that Anagnostics had extensive experience with the government sector and was reasonably priced. Commissioner Sacks mentioned that his review was not based on the cost because everything is negotiable. He felt Magee and Andrea Obston ranked at the top with Keiler following. He noted that he rejected the proposals from Baldwin and Anagnostics because they were ill prepared. Commissioner Lyons ranked the proposals as follows; Magee, Keiler then Andrea Obston. Peter Gillespie ranked Magee 1st and Andrea Obston 2nd. He commented that the other firms

fell short in responding correctly. Commissioner Hughes chose Anagnostics, Magee and Keiler. Tallies of the results are as follows:

Anagnostics	3
Baldwin	1
Vanguard	1
Andrea Obston	3
Keiler	3
Magee	6

The Commission expressed support for interviewing four firms: Magee, Keiler, Andrea Obston and Anagnostics.

- e. Shop Wethersfield Program - Commissioner Montinieri has collected brochures from other communities in which advanced efforts have been successful in portraying a consistent theme. He commented that the Wethersfield guides would be a smaller scale and streamlined down but with a good understanding of the area's strengths and weaknesses, shopkeeper participation and working with the greater community, the guide has the potential to tie everything together. Commissioner Lyons added that the advertising should pay for the guide and that the consultant could provide guidance on the content. Commissioner Cornelio questioned what role the Chamber of Commerce would play. Commissioner Montinieri noted that the Chamber's active participation is key and that the ticket to strengthening tourism in Wethersfield is to tie into the attraction of the Greater Hartford area.
- f. Display Board - Peter Gillespie reported that the Destination Connecticut event has been rescheduled from Saturday March 11th until Thursday June 1st and is now partnered with the Connecticut Business Expo. Commissioner Montinieri distributed copies of the new mural revision and a brief discussion ensued. Chair Rosania commented that that new revision looks great and is on target. Commissioner Lyons noted that the picture chosen is a universal image of Wethersfield that could be utilized for many purposes.
- g. March 15 Seminar - Peter Gillespie reported that he would put together a flyer for the event. Commissioner Lyons asked who the scheduled speakers are. Mr. Gillespie responded that representatives from Wooden Toy, Max Bibo's, Blades, Clearing House, Neil Walsh Jewelers and City Fish have all been asked to participate and only City Fish hadn't confirmed. Chair Rosania commented that the range of business types to appear should appeal to a wide range of interests. Commissioner Sacks recommended listing the speakers in alphabetical order by business name.
- h. STEAP - Bonnie Therrien reported that she has met with representatives from STEAP about the two applications that were submitted. The total funding requested was \$900,000 of which \$500,000 would be earmarked for Silas Deane Highway improvements and \$400,000 for the Façade Program. The representatives expressed their concern that none of the funds from the previous STEAP award has been spent. Ms. Therrien noted that a decision is expected to come in the spring.
- i. Budget 2005/2006 - Mr. Gillespie summarized the operating budget and explained that one time expenses can be carried over.

4. New Business

- a. Budget 2006/2007 - A brief discussion ensued regarding the proposed budget; Chair Rosania expressed concern with regards to the Tourism Commission's budget request. She noted that last years Tourism budget was \$17,500 and that the Commission is requesting \$71,592 for the 2006-2007 budget period. She questioned the need for a \$54,094 increase. Commissioner Montinieri remarked that the Tourism Commission does not expect to receive the full funding request but that they wanted to express the need for additional funds. Denise Bradley was present at a Special Meeting of the Tourism Commission held on January 11th and reported that the Tourism Commission's top four funding priorities are as follows:

1. Print Advertising
 2. Media Advertising
 3. Consultant Fees
 4. Brochure revision
 - b. Double A Transportation Shuttle - Commissioner Montinieri discussed meeting with representatives from the Convention Center and the Marketing Division as being successful. He described the goal of identifying two or three events that compliment the demographics of Wethersfield and offering transportation. Mr. Montinieri went on to discuss conversations he has had with representatives from Double AA Bus Lines. He noted that while the normal hourly rate is approximately \$93, the town is being offered a rate of \$53 an hour with a minimum commitment of three hours. Wethersfield would also be required to invest in a custom wrap for the bus which will cost approximately \$4,500. The custom wrap would be dedicated equipment for the town and the advertisements would serve as a source of revenue. Commissioner Montinieri motioned to continue exploring this venture and a \$4,500 funding commitment. Commissioner Mullen seconded the motion and all voted in favor.
5. Reports of the Town Manager -
- Town Manager's Report** - Town Manager Bonnie Therrien reported on the increase in the Grand List. Ms. Therrien also reported on Governor Rell's proposal to eliminate the property taxes paid by individuals on their cars and noted that Wethersfield could face a loss upwards of \$200,000.
- Town Council Liaison's Report** - Town Councilman Andy Adil noted that the Fireside Chat with the Town Council and the Board of Education held on January 28th was a success. Mr. Adil also commented that he would like to see money spent on small projects to enhance the Silas Deane Highway progress in 2006.
- Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report** - There was no news to report.
- Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report** - Peter Gillespie reported on highlights from the Economic Development Report.
6. Chairman's Report - Chair Rosania reported that the Town Line Diner had been sold. Peter Gillespie noted that the property is located in Rocky Hill. Ms. Rosania also commented on the press release that Stew Leonard's decision to open a new facility at the old Caldor site on the Berlin Turnpike in Newington and expressed her desire to attract a small grocer to Wethersfield.
7. Sub-Committee Reports -
- Financial Strategies** - Commissioner Rizzio reported on the meeting held earlier in the week. He noted that there is progress being made in the mortgage closings for the loans.
8. Minutes- Approval of [January 2006 meeting minutes](#) - Commissioner Mullen motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Kelleher seconded and all voted in favor.
9. Correspondence
- a. Monthly Economic Development Report
 - b. Market Outlook 2006
 - c. Blue Back Square
10. Adjournment - Commissioner Greenblatt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:01 P.M. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner