

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 14, 2005 - 11:30 p.m.**

**Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall**

#### **Members Present**

Chair, Betty Rosania, Joe Cornelio, Howard Greenblatt, Kate Mullen, Joan Hughes. Paul Montinieri, Chris Lyons, Cindy Jacobs, Ralph Keleher, John Breglio, Tom Grotke, Ken Rizzio, and Andy Adil.

Also present were: Bonnie Therrien, Peter Gillespie, Julie Montinieri, Phil Knecht, Charlie Forsdick and Christine Paul.

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 by acting Chair Chris Lyons.

#### **Old Business**

##### **Real Estate Breakfast - March 16**

Chris Lyons reported that the breakfast was the third one held and it was well attended by over 20 including staff and the Mayor.

##### **Loan Program**

Mr. Gillespie spoke with Mr. Fernando Rosa and said he could provide boilerplate agreements. Grants were discussed again but decided to keep as loans. Mr. Fernando suggested that it is possible to close loans of this small size without a closing cost. This could be a \$500/loan savings. Administrative logistics should be squared away by May.

##### **Culture and Tourism Partnership Grant**

Mr. Gillespie reported that two grants were applied for: 1) Assistance with the historical Wethersfield brochure and furthering distribution and 2) Assistance with the monies for way finding program. Tourism has agreed to put up the required matching cash because they have 6K left from last year.

#### **New Business**

##### **SHDAC - Recommendation - Design Consultant Selection**

Mr. Gillespie reported that the final two design firms have given their follow-up proposals and Rocky Hill and some here wanted to negotiate with the higher end firm. One concern is how cutting 100K would affect end product. Goal is to get our final recommendation to Council by the first meeting in May.

##### **Budget 2005/2006**

Town Manager Therrien included Budget summaries and explanation handout in packet. She suggested that members attend the public hearing. Sign-up is only in person at Town Hall or at 6:30 at the high school.

Mr. Forsdick is asking for double the money they got last year specifically for the following three projects: 1) promo kit 2) display ads in national magazines 3) 3K for way finding project.

##### **STEAP**

Mr. Gillespie mentioned that the first STEAP money will probably be available in early May for the landscape architect firm. The State is asking for a revised budget and design guidelines before STEAP money will be released for the Façade program. The design firm is the group that will be creating the guidelines, so money for the Façade program will probably not be available until the fall.

### **State of the Town - May 5**

Mr. Gillespie stated that the registration form is in the packet and needs to be filled out and returned to the Chamber. Cost is \$15 for members & \$20 for non-members. Commission members and staff would be considered members.

### **Discussion with Bond Counsel**

Doug Gillette from Day, Berry & Howard LLP discussed alternative financing available to municipalities for special projects. Sometimes alternative financing can help streamline the process, avoid a referendum, and not go against the debt load. TIF and Revenue bonds were two options discussed.

## **Reports**

### **Town Manager's Report**

Town Manager Therrien mentioned three items:

1. Next year there will be 40 million more in STEAP money available. So, the Town and Rocky Hill will apply together for more money.
2. The hiring panel has picked three impressive candidates for Assistant Town Planner. Town Manager Therrien and Mr. Gillespie will complete interviewing next week.
3. Office Depot was broken into last week and the Chief of Police said that it was an inside professional job. He mentioned that crime goes in cycles but also offered to be proactive in teaching companies about proper security. The issue of crime perception was discussed. Part of the issue includes the fact that towns vary in how they report crimes and what category they use to do so.

### **Town Council Liaison's Report**

Andy Adil discussed the upcoming public hearing on the budget to be held next Monday. He suggested that members show up if they want more money for EDIC. Councilman Adil also mentioned that a statement could be submitted if unavailable to attend in person.

Chair Rosania mentioned that at this time less money is available for Land Acquisition. She stated that more education and persuasion is needed to improve this situation. Mr. Adil replied that if this is a concern that more money should be requested for this at the meeting.

### **Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report**

Phil Knecht was not present to give the report.

### **Director of Planning and Economics Development's Report**

Mr. Gillespie included the monthly update in the packet and highlighted a few recent activities such as: Office Depot grand opening, Starbucks ribbon cutting, Main St. Creamery ribbon cutting, Lasik Vision Plus, and Baby Boom opening soon in end unit at eh Golf Brook shops.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chairman Rosania thanked John Breglio and Chris Lyons for a job well done on the Realtor Breakfast and began discussion on whether EDIC should continue to spend \$400 on a booth at the Corn Fest. It was decided that EDIC

wants to support/partner with the Chamber but not continue having a booth. Cindy Jacobs motioned to discontinue spending \$400 for this event, Tom Grottke seconded the motion, a friendly amendment by Chris Lyons motioned to simply not have a booth; all voted in favor with Joan Hughes abstaining.

The chair asked that a discussion about Chamber friendly allocations/commitments be included on the next agenda.

## **Sub-Committee Reports**

### **Marketing and Communications**

Chris Lyons welcomes Charlie Forsdick, Chair of the Tourism Commission to update commission. Charlie thanks Chris Lyons and Paul Montinieri. Charlie explained that a Fam trip of Wethersfield is being planned for those involved in planning local tourism events. The estimated cost would probably run \$20 per person and 50 people would attend. When cocktails at the Old Village Tavern were mentioned Town Manager Therrien mentioned that it is best to not spend tax money on alcohol.

Tom Grottke motioned to provide \$1,000 towards the Fam Tour as requested by Mr. Forsdick; Cindy Jacobs seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

### **Financial Strategies**

Ken Rizzio reported on loan program. The goal is to have monies available by the end of May and also make this a permanent part of the budget. Administrative details are what are left to be worked out.

The Chair asked how we plan to get the word out. Mr. Gillespie stated that he plans to mail the information to potential applicants, press release, web site etc...

### **Development Initiatives**

Tom Grottke reported on his discussion with Mr. Gillespie and Andy Adil with hopes to bring ideas before Council. He asked if this subcommittee should have a role with SDHAC and what role if any they could play in supporting the Town Manager and Town Planner.

Goals mentioned:

1. Devise a business plan/feasibility

Few areas - groups - 1 year ago sited 20 sites

Lean toward multiple sites since business can slow up if only one site is done (Ex. Five development sites on the Silas Deane Highway)

2. Targeting Sept for first site for November referendum
3. First goal is to support individuals and developers to obtain construction financing, preferring not to use eminent domain
4. Help town staff know type of funding need to seek for projects (the meeting with the attorney was helpful)

The next meeting will be April 27th.

## **Meeting Minutes of January 2005**

Ken Rizzio motioned to accept [the minutes](#), all voted in favor.

## **Adjournment**

Kate Mullen motioned to adjourn; Ken Rizzio seconded the motion, all voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Christine Paul