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Economic Development & Improvement Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 11, 2005 - 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Chair Rosania called the meeting at 12:00 p.m.
2. Attendance - Members in attendance: Chair Betty Rosania, Frank Frago, Joan Hughes, Kenneth Rizzio, Ralph Keleher, Douglas Sacks, Howard Greenblatt and Joe Cornelio.

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

3. Old Business
 - a. Business Survey - Frank Frago reported on the results from the 2004 survey. Mr. Frago stated that three (3) or four (4) issues raised in the survey would be examined and to determine whether any progress had been made on them.
 - b. Real Estate Breakfast - There was no one present to speak on the issue.
 - c. Loan Program - Ken Rizzio reported that four loan proposals had been submitted. On August 9, 2005 the Finance Committee met and made loan recommendations to the EDIC as follows:
 1. Rainbow Center For Children and Families
80 Garden Street
Ozlem Camli
Request: \$5,400
Total Project: \$6,000
Building exterior and front porch to be repaired and painted
RECOMMEND \$4,000 loan over 3 years.
 2. Gourmet Gatherings By Ascot
136 Main Street
Tom and Julia Sapia
Request: \$15,000
Total Project: \$30,000
Install new windows, recondition existing windows, paint trim work, and recondition front doors.
RECOMMEND \$12,000 loan over 4 years.
 3. The Atlantic Inn
1840 Berlin Turnpike
John E. Kulesza
Request: \$15,000
Total Project: \$28,000
Roof replacement with architectural shingle roof.
RECOMMEND \$12,000 loan over 4 years with the stipulation that there be a satisfactory resolution of the Progress Drive subdivision.

4. Wolcott Center Condo Association

685 Wolcott Hill Road

Salvatore Scalora and Leo Papas

Request: \$15,000

Total Project: \$34,107.10

Remove glass storefront and replace with new windows, brick, soffitts, columns, trim and new doors.

RECOMMEND \$12,000 loan over 4 years and Design Review Advisory Committee approval.

Peter Gillespie noted that John Kulesza of the Atlantic Inn was also the principle of the incomplete Progress Drive subdivision. Chair Rosania expressed her concern over the unresolved land use issues and back taxes and the possibility of using those outstanding issues as leverage. She noted that the total funds requested between the four applications would deplete the entire fund. A brief discussion ensued over granting loan approval only if the unresolved issues were cleared and to otherwise use the funding for another project.

Peter Gillespie explained that the EDIC has the final vote before the Town enters into a memorandum of understanding. Chair Rosania asked that the minutes reflect that the Committee expressed a consensus to endorse the work of the Finance Committee however there was no quorum to allow a vote. Additionally, the Committee requested that Peter Gillespie checks to see that all taxes are current on the properties subject to loan approval.

- d. Fam Tour - In Paul Montiniere's absence, Peter Gillespie reported that the Tourism Commission did go back to Destination Connecticut and were able to get some additional services and would put together a contact list for the Tourism Committee.
- e. Business Visitation Program - Chris Lyons was not in attendance. Chair Rosania asked that anyone interested in volunteering to let Peter Gillespie know.
- f. Farmer's Market - Joan Hughes reported to the EDIC that she had visited both the Deep River and the Rocky Hill Farmer's Market's. She described the Deep River event as being very nice because of its location and the large number of vendors that participated. The Rocky Hill Farmer's Market had only two vendors and was held in a less desirable location. Bonnie Therrien noted that she had met with the Town Manager's from Rocky Hill and Newington to discuss putting a regional market together. Ms. Therrien said that there were several issues that needed to be addressed before preparations could move forward including identifying an appropriate location and the need to meet with local farmer's.
- g. Bus Tour - Peter Gillespie reported that a tentative date of August 31, 2005 had been set and noted that the intent would be to look at potential development sites and problems facing the Silas Deane Highway. It was noted that there was the potential for a bussing conflict due to the first day of school. Chair Rosania commented that she would be away ands requested that the Bus Tour be pushed back until her return. Mr. Gillespie stated that he would reschedule the tour and report back to EDIC.
- h. Silas Deane Highway Plan - Peter Gillespie reported that the contractual start to the project commenced with a kick-off meeting. Ted Desantos of Fuss & O'Neil provided a project schedule. Mr. Gillespie noted that the contract between the Town and Fuss & O'Neil had been signed. A brief discussion ensued on the importance of focusing on development sites at the north end of the Silas Deane Highway. Mr. Gillespie commented that it was Fuss & O'Neil's intent to get the final comprehensive plans beginning in January.
- i. Anne Kuckro, President of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum Board read into record a letter to the EDIC pertaining to a request from Mr. Paul Gionfriddo and Mr. William Lobb for funding a half-hour documentary video on Silas Deane. Chair Rosania called for comments from the EDIC. Bonnie Therrien noted that the Council would likely be more receptive to funding the project in some capacity if there was a private/public sponsorship in place.

4. New Business

- a. RFP Marketing Assistance/Tourism Committee - Peter Gillespie reported that the Tourism Commission and the Marketing Committee would hold a joint meeting on August 18, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Gillespie noted that the RFP probably wouldn't be complete until the next meeting.
- b. Cornfest - September 16/17 - Peter Gillespie reported that the Chamber of Commerce was soliciting sponsorship. Chair Rosania noted that the EDIC had previously contributed but that it had voted not to do so this year. Frank Frago questioned why the EDIC was not participating. Bonnie Therrien commented that the booth was not manned. Chair Rosania expressed her opinion that there hadn't been a notable benefit from the previous sponsorship of the event.
- c. Salute To Business - Peter Gillespie noted that the Salute to Business was held last year at the Keeney and the \$2,000 cost for the foods, awards, and linens was split between the Chamber of Commerce and the EDIC. A discussion ensued about holding this year's event at the Wethersfield Country Club. Mr. Gillespie commented that while the County Club would be more expensive, the Keeney is very labor intensive to set up. Chair Rosania felt the Country Club would be a more professional venue for the event. Phil Knecht noted that the Chamber would be honoring their longest standing members. Mr. Knecht commented that he would like to see new business, service awards and non-Chamber long standing businesses recognized. Mr. Gillespie noted that the EDIC would start talking about potential award recipients at the next meeting.
- d. Business After Hours - September 28th - The event had tentatively been scheduled for September 28, 2005 at 5:30 at the Wells House. A discussion ensued and due to scheduling conflicts with that date, there was a consensus to postpone the event until October or November.

5. Reports of the Town Manager -

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

- a. An oral agreement between Stop & Shop and Ocean State Job Lots that would allow for Ocean State Job Lots to prospectively open at the Silas Deane location in early November.
- b. Sports Authority's option on the Fun Zone property fell through.

Town Council Liaison's Report - Andy Adil reported:

- a. Blight Ordinance has started showing good results.
- b. Puritan Furniture has agreed to remove the steel structure from the property.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's - Phil Knecht reported that the Commission, along with its new members, will continue to push for new businesses in Wethersfield.

Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report - Peter Gillespie reported on the following:

- a. Owner Ronnie Esposito will hold a grand opening at Baby Boom in the Goff Brook Shops.
- b. Cedar Hill Cemetery broke ground on a new mausoleum.
- c. John Tartaglia's proposal to convert an existing building at 295 Ridge Road into twelve (12) active adult condominiums.
- d. Bill Bellock withdrew an application for Age Restricted Housing on Folly Brook Boulevard.
- e. An application for a zone change of the Harris Property on Old Reservoir Road and Back Lane has been held.
- f. An application to construct a Tim Horton's restaurant with a drive-thru at 486 Silas Deane Highway.

6. Chairman's Report - Chair Rosania reported on the concern she has over receiving negative comments from merchants. She noted that she would like to see all matters of concern followed up upon.

7. Adjournment - Chair Rosania adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise Bradley
Assistant Planner