

**Economic Development & Improvement Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 8, 2005 - 12:00 Noon**  
**Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall**  
**MINUTES**

1. Call To Order - Chair Chris Lyons called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M.
2. Attendance - Members in attendance: Acting Chair Chris Lyons, Frank Frago, Joan Hughes, Kenneth Rizzio, Joe Cornelio, Kate Mullen, Douglas Sacks, Cindy Jacobs, Paul Montineri, Howard Greenblatt and Ralph Kelleher.

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

3. Old Business
  - a. Business Survey - Frank Frago explained that while there would be no new survey conducted this year, problem areas identified in last years narrative would be examined. Mr. Frago stated that not much progress had been made to date but that he would continue to provide updates to the EDIC.
  - b. Real Estate Breakfast - Peter Gillespie noted two dates for the breakfast as being October 12th or October 13th at the Wethersfield Country Club at 8:00 A.M. Bonnie Therrien suggested a few potential topics including Fuss & O'Neil's preliminary findings regarding the Master Plan for the Silas Deane Highway. Mr. Gillespie noted that there is a public information meeting with Fuss & O'Neil scheduled for October 5th. Mr. Cornelio suggested inviting local contractors to discuss new development issues, opportunities and constraints.
  - c. Loan Program - Peter Gillespie reported that he had spoken with John Kulesza, owner of the Atlantic Inn located at 1840 Berlin Turnpike, regarding the stipulations of the loan approval that need to be satisfied prior to the disbursal of funds. Mr. Gillespie noted that Mr. Kulesza was concerned that the funding of the rehabilitation of the subject property could be held up due to outstanding concerns with back taxes associated with the Progress Drive subdivision. Mr. Gillespie then discussed the request made by Salvatore Scalora and Leo Papas, of 685 Wolcott Hill Road, to extend the approved loan term from four (4) years to five (5) years. Mr. Frago commented that he had no problems with stretching the loan term to five (5) years and made a motion to approve the change. Mr. Cornelio seconded and all voted in favor. Mr. Cornelio commented that the anticipated loan repayment would replenish the revolving fund enough to possibly fund approximately one (1) additional loan per year. Mr. Gillespie reported that the Capitol Improvement Projects (CIP) funding request was not approved but that it could be reapplied to for next years budget.
  - d. Business Visitation Program - Peter Gillespie discussed the need to get the subcommittee together again. Bonnie Therrien noted that she and the Mayor have set four dates to go out. Phil Knecht discussed his concerns over some of the businesses in town that may be in trouble due to low customer volumes. Mr. Knecht specifically cited Kainan and Office Depot and expressed that it would be detrimental to the community to lose the businesses but was unsure if there is anyway the EDIC could become actively involved. Doug Sacks commented that many of the struggling retailers do not have the marketing expertise needed. He suggested that the Marketing Sub-Committee could give these business owners advice and that the outreach could be tied to the Business Visitation Program
  - e. Farmer's Market - Chair Chris Lyons commented that he would like to see a Farmer's Market up and running in October of November of this year. Mr. Gillespie noted that while the State of Connecticut supports the markets and would assist the Town in finding interested participants, the markets usually

only run until late October and the likelihood of getting everything in place for this season is low. He added that he had spoken with the Wethersfield Shopping Center and that they are not interested in hosting the event and in order to proceed, a venue would need to be identified. Mr. Cornelio expressed his opposition to hosting a Farmer's Market due to the direct competition it would be to the existing Anderson and Morris farm stands. Chair Lyons commented that Anderson and Morris would be likely participants. Bonnie Therrien noted that she had set a tentative meeting with local farmers for October and would shoot for a Farmer's Market kick-off in spring 2006. Ms. Hughes discussed how the Farmer's Market could also become a forum to showcase additional items.

- f. Bus Tour - Peter Gillespie noted that the previously scheduled date was cancelled due to conflict with the first day of school and that a new date was set for Wednesday September 28th at 5:30 P.M.
- g. Silas Deane Highway Plan - Peter Gillespie noted that a public information session was set for 5:30 P.M. Wednesday October 6th at the Wethersfield Police Department Meeting Room. He explained that the consulting firm, Fuss & O'Neil, are still in the preliminary phases of research. Mr. Gillespie commented that the meeting would be a forum to discuss opportunities and constraints relating to transportation, land-use, streetscape and branding. Mr. Cornelio then questioned how realistic the schedule was for the public referendum on proposed bonding. Mrs. Therrien responded that the funding mechanism being used is revenue bonds which don't require a referendum.

#### 4. New Business

- a. RFP Marketing Assistance/Tourism Commission - Chair Chris Lyons described the project as a joint venture with the EDIC to ensure a consistent message.
- b. Salute To Business - Peter Gillespie noted that the event is planned this year to be held at the Wethersfield Country Club on December 14th and pointed out that the Marketing Sub-Committee will meet at Joan Hughes' store on September 16th to discuss the criteria and make recommendations for award recipients. Phil Knecht commented that he would like to see an award presented to businesses for length of service to the community.

#### 5. Reports of the Town Manager -

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

- a. The need to start the Land Use Committee up again on a quarterly basis.
- b. The Hartford Metro Alliance compiling a list of Wi-Fi hot spots.
- c. Ocean State Job Lot anticipates a November 10th Grand Opening.

**Town Council Liaison's Report** - Councilman Andrew Adil reported on the following:

- a. The Council's disappointment over the IWWA decision on the Folly Brook Boulevard Project.
- b. Road work projects proceeding around Wethersfield.
- c. A \$15,000 Tourism Grant that Wethersfield is applying for.
- d. The need for better attendance from members of the various town committee's at the Business After Hours events.

**Planning & Zoning Commission Liason's Report** - Planning and Zoning Commissioner Phil Knecht reported on the following:

- a. The public hearing for the Old Reservoir Road zone change application was closed but no decision yet rendered.
- b. The Tim Horton's restaurant at 486 Silas Deane Highway was approved.
- c. The Dunkin' Donuts restaurant at 416 Silas Deane Highway was approved.
- d. The public hearing for the 295 Ridge Road application to convert an existing building into twelve age restricted condominiums was continued.

6. Chairman's Report - Chair Chris Lyons commented that despite the EDIC's decision to not host a booth at the Cornfest, he would like to see the EDIC make a monetary contribution to the event. A brief discussion ensued and Ken Rizzio made a motion to pledge \$400 to the event. Kate Mullen seconded and all voted in favor.
7. Minutes- Approval of [August 2005 meeting minutes](#) - Mr. Rizzio noted that he was not in attendance and did not participate in the August 11, 2005 meeting. He requested that the minutes reflect his absence.
8. Correspondence
  - a. Monthly Economic Development Report, August 2005
  - b. The Connecticut Economy September 9, 2005 - Mr. Gillespie noted that the Department of Transportation is funding a \$40,000 downtown shuttle.
9. Adjournment - Mr. Frago motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:14 P.M. Mr. Cornelio seconded and all voted in favor.

Respectfully Submitted

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner