

[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, December 8, 2005 - 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Chair Rosania called the meeting to order at 12:03 P.M.
2. Attendance - Members in attendance: Chair Betty Rosania, Ken Rizzio, Kate Mullen, Joe Cornelio, Ralph Kelleher, Joan Hughes, Howard Greenblatt, Frank Frago, Paul Montineri Chris Lyons and Doug Sacks.

Members absent: John Breglio, Tom Grottke and Cindy Jacobs.

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. Business Visitation Program - Commissioner Lyons noted that a meeting had been held on Friday, December 2nd and asked for EDIC members to volunteer to assist in the program administration. Commissioners Montineri, Greenblatt, Cornelio, Jacobs and Phil Knecht (PZC) volunteered.
 - b. Farmer's Market - Bonnie Therrien noted that a number of local farmer's participated in the meeting which was held in late November to discuss Preservation of Farmland. At the meeting the consensus of the farmer's was to not participate in a Farmer's Market due to labor and transportation constraints. Ms. Therrien commented that if there is a desire to move forward, the Nature Center has indicated that they would be happy to host the events at their facility. Chair Rosania noted that she had spoken with Frank Morris and that he had indicated his desire to move forward. Commissioner Montineri commented that he had been involved in a Farmer's Market in Burlington, VT. He added that it seems the town is currently going after the wrong market and that a focus should be brought to targeting other homegrown/homemade products such as flowers and crafts. Ms. Therrien noted that Kathy Bagley is responsible of the town's agricultural plots near the firehouse that are available for resident's to grow produce. She added that the Friends of the Library might want to participate if they could sell books.
 - c. Silas Deane Highway Plan - Peter Gillespie mentioned that a meeting would be held on Monday December 12th at 4:30 P.M. to review the preliminary plans submitted by Fuss & O'Neill. He noted that Fuss & O'Neill has indicated that they couldn't proceed until Rocky Hill and Wethersfield come up with a unified theme/brand/image.
 - d. Salute To Business - Peter Gillespie noted that the event would take place on Thursday December 15th from 5:30-8:30 at the Wethersfield Country Club. He described the three different types of awards to be presented and that there would be a total of thirty-one recipients. Chair Rosania indicated that she takes issue with one of the potential honorees. She noted that the Capitol Motor Inn has had a checkered past and that while she does not want to be biased, she is of the impression that it would be embarrassing for the town to honor a business that is not in good physical condition. Bonnie Therrien commented that she would like to see the list of prospective recipients be checked to see if any taxes are owed.

4. New Business

- a. RFP Marketing Assistance/Tourism Commission - Peter Gillespie noted that the intent is to get the RFP out to bid by December 15th.
- b. Shop Wethersfield Program- Frank Frago dispersed a memo to the Commission and discussed data taken from the 2004 Annual Business Survey in which three common themes were identified. The common themes identified include the need for name recognition, to stimulate more interest in town business and to promote Wethersfield. Commissioner Frago explained that in order to push this new initiative a name needs to be chosen, partnerships established, a budget set and publications circulated. Peter Gillespie commented that because the cost of publications could run high, there would have to be some sort of a "buy-in" incentive in which the cost would be shared between the Chamber of Commerce, the EDIC and the profiled business. Commissioners Mullen, Frago and Knecht (PZC) then volunteered to assist in establishing the program.
- c. STEAP Application - Peter Gillespie noted that two applications were being submitted. The total funding requested is \$900,000 of which \$500,000 would be earmarked for Silas Deane Highway improvements and \$400,000 for the Façade Program. Mr. Gillespie indicated that there isn't a set deadline for application submission and that it could take until early Spring 2006 to learn of the outcome.
- d. Display Board - Paul Montinieri noted that design and pricing data had been collected on display boards offered through Wingsite, Oldham and Creative Dimensions. He commented that the order would be finalized by late December so the display board would be ready for the Tourism Commission's March presentation at the new convention center.
- e. Preserve America - Peter Gillespie explained that the town's recent designation as Preserve America community allows Wethersfield to apply for a matching-grant funding program to support preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education and historic preservation planning. The applications are due on Friday December 16th. Bonnie Therrien pointed out that an in-kind match could be used to meet any of the town's funding commitments.

5. Reports of the Town Manager -

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

- a. One of the four conceptual site plans was received from Fuss & O'Neill.
- b. The Town Attorney will be looking at the Town Charter to review provisions regarding Redevelopment Agency Status.
- c. The steel structure on the Puritan Furniture property has been removed.
- d. John Lepper, Property Maintenance Inspector has been making progress and aggressively working to resolve issues relating to the Blighted Property List.
- e. The 120,000 s. f. Northeast Utilities building located at 176 Cumberland Avenue was recently listed for sale. The listing agent is John McCormick of CB Richard Ellis.

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

- a. The next Fireside Chat with the Town Council and the Board of Education will take place on January 28th at Stillman School.
- b. Make a strong public case and set aggressive goals in order to pursue positive changes on the Silas Deane Highway.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison's Report - Phil Knecht reported on the following:

- a. The application seeking to construct a car wash at 1715 Berlin Turnpike was approved.
- b. The application seeking to construct an outbuilding at the Wethersfield Country Club was approved.

c. The application seeking to operate a nail and skin salon at 277 Main Street was approved.

Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report - Peter Gillespie highlighted the Economic Development Report.

6. Chairman's Report - Chair Rosania commented that she would like to see press representative receive complimentary tickets to town sponsored events.

7. Sub-Committee Reports -

Marketing and Communications - Ken Rizzio reported that the Finance Committee met on December 7th. He noted that there are three active loans for projects in various levels of completion and that \$12,000 was still available. Peter Gillespie met with town officials in Rocky Hill to discuss the details of the proposed façade improvement program based on the STEAP program.

8. Minutes - Approval of [November 2005 meeting minutes](#) - Frank Frago motioned to approve the minutes. Joe Cornelio seconded and all voted in favor.

9. Correspondence

a. Press Release related to the Preserve America Community designation.

10. Adjournment - Paul Montinieri made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:31 P.M. Frank Frago seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner