



MINUTES

July 17, 2018

Meeting Room 3 - 7:00pm

Present:

Wes Thompson, Cramer Owen, Matthew Mihalcik, Amy Dent, Al Roznicki, Bob Rau (arrived 7:03), Christal Preszler – Deputy Director Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta – Economic and Community Development & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

Public Participation:

None

Absent:

Dana Trado, Nick Roussas, Steve Gogliettino, Scott Orlando

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Amy Dent made a motion to accept the minutes from June 19, 2018. Matt Mihalcik seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Chairman's Report:

Wes began by informing members they will deliberate and vote on a topic, then discuss CIP and marketing.

Budget discussion:

Wes began by reminding members of the detailed review of the financials in the last meeting, and that base activities consume about \$16,000 of the budget. In that meeting the group had agreed that from an economic development perspective the remaining funds should be reserved to assist the Fairfield Hills Authority with the Stratford Hall renovation tasks that are the responsibility of the town. He further highlighted that there is a high potential for closing with the business who is making a substantial investment in renovating the building.

With the limited budget, one project will be to create a tri-fold fact sheet that can be distributed at realtor meetings and to interested businesses. Amy Dent is currently assisting Kim with updating the Tour of Newtown video which will be good marketing outreach from the town's website. Steve forwarded Wes a draft welcome letter that will be used as the cover letter for a packet to welcome new businesses to Newtown. Wes has requested some updates to the letter and will have the final draft brought forward to the EDC for review.



Business Incentive Program - Start Date:

Wes informed members that the current version of the Business Incentive Program dictates that the incentive is effective upon approval of the final Certificate of Occupancy (CO). This creates a difficult task for the Tax Department as it is necessary to calculate the incentive using partial years for the term of the incentive. To resolve this issue, the Tax Department has requested that the incentive start date be changed to begin the fiscal year after the approval of the final CO. Wes confirmed that other towns have encountered the same issue. The group agreed to this change in concept and that new verbiage would be reviewed and voted on in the next meeting. Christal will perform further research and propose new wording in the August meeting.

Questionnaire discussion:

Wes then mentioned to the group that Amy had shared a multi-page questionnaire with the First Selectman. After some discussion, Amy clarified that the intent of this questionnaire was for members of the EDC to bring with them when visiting larger businesses in Newtown so that they will all collect the same types of information that can be used in analyzing the needs of businesses in Newtown. Wes asked that Amy re-present this questionnaire in the August meeting. He also added that it may be beneficial to have a version for smaller town businesses. Amy will also be reviewing a document proposed to distribute to realtors.

Economic and Community Development – Staff Updates:

CIP discussion:

Wes asked Christal to summarize the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget process. Christal began by explaining that there is an operating budget and a CIP budget, each of which has its own process. There is a review of proposed 10 year budget plans for each department/group. Christal informed members that in the past EDC had been allocated \$350,000 for sidewalks which was cut this year. However, this year there is a brownfield line item that was added. AS part of the review process it is determined which projects are reasonable. Wes explained to members that in the past EDC had supported projects being performed by other groups such as Public Works for the exit 9 sewer project, and that this is something to consider. Christal presented a list of projects that could be considered for proposal including traffic light installations, brownfield clean-up, and sewer water extension. The conversation then turned to possibly requesting CIP funds for Deep Brook West/Tech Park to install the road and possibly infrastructure. The group then discussed economic analysis of projects to determine cost benefits and if this is a necessary step.



New businesses and developments:

Christal then informed members of the new pottery studio, Milestone Studio, on South Main Street. Wes visited the studio on behalf of the EDC and asked the owner if there is any way the town can assist. The owner informed Wes of a dilemma with signage. The owner then discussed how the EDC could help this new business overcome this issue.

Meetings & events:

Christal continued in telling the group about the CERC 25th Anniversary celebration that Cramer and Wes will be attending to represent the EDC, and the Fairfield County Commercial Realtors being held Monday in Trumbull. Christal also mentioned progress on 75 Church Hill, and the ground breaking ceremony for assisted living facility.

Member Comments and General Discussion:

Cramer informed the group that the brewery at Fairfield Hills is moving ahead.

Al recommended that for people who volunteer in Newtown should get a tax benefit, but would exempt EDC.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by Amy Dent at 8:11 pm and was seconded by Matt Mihalcik.

Respectfully Submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk