

Newtown Municipal Center
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT
www.newtown.org



MINUTES

May 16, 2017

Meeting Room 3 - 7:00pm

Present:

Bob Rau, Cramer Owen, Amy Dent (arrived 7:05), Matthew Mihalcik, Al Roznicki, Mike Boyle, Nick Roussas, Christal Preszler – Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta (clerk).

Public Participation:

Heather and Warren Kimball – 5K Enterprises
Tony Lucera – Covered Bridge

Absent:

Wes Thompson, Dana Trado, Bill May

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

Mike Boyle made the motion to accept the minutes from April 18, 2017 and Cramer Owen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Business Tax Incentives:

Bob Rau welcomed the business owners and explained the process for the Business Tax Incentive to the applicants.

1. 5 K Enterprises – 3 Edmond Rd

Heather Kimball, representing 5K Enterprises spoke about the proposed project. She explained that the property is a total of 90,000 square feet and there is currently 20,000 square feet with existing buildings. Each building is comprised of 3 – 5 rental units containing local small business tenants. 5K also uses a portion of the property for their excavation business.

5K Enterprises is looking into 2 expansion options: 1) additional 14,000 square feet, 2) or additional 9,000 square feet. Cramer Owen asked for details on the expansion and was informed that 5K Enterprises has not yet made a decision on which option they will proceed. The project will take between 9 – 10 months. Bob Rau asked why 5K Enterprises was applying for the business incentive. Ms. Kimball informed the group that the tax savings could be passed onto potential tenants in the way of a low rental cost, therefore more quickly attracting potential tenants. She explained that 5K has lost potential tenants in the past to other towns. Cramer asked Christal if EDC has all of the necessary information from 5K. Christal then explained the assessments process and confirmed all necessary information has been provided. Heather Kimball informed the Commission that 5K has been established in Newtown for 10 years, and that prior to that had units in Woodbury. Bob Rau explained that the Commission



needs to review the details before presenting to Board of Selectmen, and thanked 5K Enterprises for attending.

2. Covered Bridge

Tony Lucera owner and representative for Covered Bridge began by explaining to the commission that he has built the same type of incentive housing in Westport and Brookfield. The original plan for the property was to build condominiums, but with the economic decline there is now more of a call for rental units. This project will also include a 4,000 square foot restaurant on the property.

Bob Rau asked what would be done with the incentive benefit from the town. Mr. Lucera explained the tax savings would reduce the operating rate, which then would be more beneficial to renters. He expressed that the site is a perfect location for commuters, and that the benefit to the town is the ability to offer low cost rental properties to encourage youth who attended school here to stay in or return to town. Amy Dent asked what was the demographic, and Bob confirmed that the rental units would attract millennials and possibly some seniors. A question was asked regarding the impact to the school system and Mr. Lucera replied that there is no foreseen impact and that he would pursue finding a team who could provide details. Christal Preszler mentioned this project would create 27 jobs plus jobs for sub-contractors for property maintenance such as grass cutting and snow removal. The site work is scheduled to begin immediately, but further plans are pending the town's reaction to the project. Amy asked if he would be asking for more of an incentive as the project continues and Mr. Lucera clarified that the application is for the entire project. Bob informed Mr. Lucera that the Commission would probably have more questions and will contact him. Mr. Lucera informed everyone that they can read more about him on his site, <http://www.contractingadvisors.com/>.

After Ms. Kimball and Mr. Lucera left, the Commission members had a brief discussion on each project to determine if everyone agreed that these project are considered economic development, and all were in agreement.

3. Riverwalk

The Commission members briefly discussed whether the Riverwalk project had stalled.

Reports:

Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development - report:

Christal Preszler reported that Newtown Restaurant week will be during CT Restaurant week to possibly benefit from the state's advertising. Newtown Restaurant week was posted on Facebook and Christal found this post received the most hits.



Christal informed members that the Newtown Middle School moving up ceremony will be held in town this year, so Kim Chiappetta will be communicating this information to local restaurants, shops & parents so they can advertise and prepare.

She also informed the Commission that there has recently been more interest in Fairfield Hills. R.E.A.C.H. is interested in one of the duplexes, and is trying to get State assistance for remediation of the roof and windows. They are in the process of trying to pull lease together. There are also 2 private enterprises related to food interested in Stratford Hall, and 1 of the 2 is also interested in a duplex. Christal also mentioned that the expertise within the Economic Development group would be beneficial to Fairfield Hills.

Christal made everyone aware that the Fairfield Hills Streetscape will be underway shortly, but there has been a hold-up due to State requirements. The project will be composed of new trees, sidewalks and lights. The soccer field will have a black chain link fence to ensure soccer balls and children stay out of the road. Fairfield Hills will be putting some money toward project. Bob Rau praised Christal for her work in obtaining the grant.

Finally, Christal notified the Commission that two new businesses would be opening soon in town; Beef & Barley (restaurant) and Barre both opening in Highland Plaza.

Commissioner's Reports:

SHOP:

Mike Boyle reported S.H.O.P. is nearing their goal for the Museum in the Streets. Mike Burton will be meeting with businesses to see if more donations can be obtained. There is also a meeting scheduled with the vendor from Maine. Christal reminded Mike that SHOP need the signs approved. Mike asked that Christal attend the next SHOP meeting. Finally he reminded everyone that the Duck race is scheduled for 5/27.

Marketing Report:

Amy Dent reported that she spoke with an Executive Director of a group composed of 4 organizations dealing in real estate development. The group has a monthly lunch meeting in Stamford where it may be beneficial to network. Amy informed the Commission of another commercial realtor networking opportunity with the Fairfield County Commercial Brokers Network. This group holds traveling events that feature new properties or newly renovated properties. Christal mentioned keeping in mind the EDC is near the budget year end, so funds may still be available for attending events.



Nick added that he knows two real estate developers who have both asked him what Newtown wants and doesn't want. He also knows a Bridgeport property owner who purchased a building which required extensive asbestos and lead removal, and thought they may be interested in the unique buildings offered in the Fairfield Hills campus.

Deep Brook West:

Cramer Owen reported that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) stated concerns with the road accessing the proposed buildings. Consultants are working on a revised plan that will go back to DEP. After the revised plan is approved by the DEP it may have to then be reviewed and approved by the Army Corps of Engineers. Bob asked if Hubbard Nature Park will have an impact to the Deep Brook project. Cramer does not feel this is an issue. Mike asked if proposed overlay zone has an impact, and Cramer's response was that it does not.

Business Incentives Questionnaire:

Cramer Owen expressed that the application should be expanded to ask for more data because a decision cannot be made with the information obtained from the current version. It is also being considered that the updated version could not be too detailed and become burdensome to the applicant. Christal reminded members that there are currently only 3 questions. Bob recommended asking the applicant why the incentive is important to them. Mike added that the applicant should provide the business's background, and that it would be best to have this information prior to meeting with the applicant.

Business Questionnaire regarding future plans:

Bob explained to the Commission the need to obtain basic information from businesses that could be leveraged to identify economic opportunities. Amy added that the questionnaire should be used only for larger tax payers or for businesses with potential of interacting with larger businesses. Al recommended identifying successful Newtown businesses to highlight them when trying to attract new businesses. Mike expressed the need to build a relationship with these businesses in order to have the questionnaire completed with useful information.

Chairman's Report:

Borough Zoning Commission – Edmond Town Hall:

Bob Rau reported to the group that the Borough Zoning Commission had a meeting last week to solicit ideas on how to make Edmond Town Hall more financially independent. Specifically, the Borough Zoning Commission is looking for ideas on how to obtain rental tenants, or another way to generate

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revenue for the town. The Borough will consider changes to zoning if the plan suites the character of Main St.

Village at Lexington Gardens:

Bob next reported that The Village at Lexington Gardens does not yet have all buildings fully occupied. In a conversation the developer expressed that he recognizes these concerns.

Tractor Supply:

He then informed the group that the Tractor Supply building is now underway and should develop rapidly.

WestCOG:

For members who were not aware, Bob informed the group of WestCOG which is a group of 18 towns in CT who work together considering infrastructure, transportation, etc. Christal added they have a monthly meeting which she attends. She is requesting to have browns fields added to the group's considerations. She added that Economic Development is also a member of Naugatuck Valley group who has expertise is in brownfields.

Flag Pole Traffic Study:

Bob reported that the developer Chris Hottois presented the town with a traffic plan for the flag pole intersection. Chris Hottois is the developer that restored the building where Dere St resides and the building in Sandy Hook where the Nouveau Monde Wine Bar is located. Mr. Hottois has offered to pay for implementation of the plan if accepted by the town. Police think highly of this plan, but it must be approved by State.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by Amy Dent at 9:15 pm and was seconded by Cramer Owen.

Respectfully Submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk