



MINUTES

December 15, 2020

This meeting was held remotely due to COVID-19 mandates and precautions.

Present:

Wes Thompson, Barbara Snyder, Jeffrey Robinson, Valerie Fallon, Cramer Owen, Steve Gogliettino, Tracey Pertoso (arrived 7:24 pm), Kim Chiappetta – Economic and Community Development & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

Absent: Al Roznicki, Nick Roussas

Public Attendance:

1 member of the public dialed in.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Public Participation:

None.

Approval of Minutes:

Cramer Owen made a motion to accept the minutes from November 17, 2020. Barbara Snyder seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Election of EDC Officers:

Chairman:

Vice Chairman Wes Thompson opened-up nominations for the Chair of the EDC.

Cramer Owen nominated Wes Thompson because of his long history of supporting the EDC and his interest in supporting the related activities.

With no further nominations, the Vice Chairman recognized the one nomination for Chairman, and noted all nominations were accepted.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Vice Chairman:

Wes opened nominations for the Vice Chairman.



Barbara Snyder put forward Jeffrey Robinson for Vice Chair.

With no further nominations, the Vice Chairman noted all nominations accepted.

Motion passed with all in favor.

Wes explained that Jeffrey will begin holding the position of Vice Chair beginning next year. He then thanked Jeffrey for accepting the nomination.

Economic and Community Development - Staff Updates:

Ribbon Cutting:

In Christal Preszler's absence, Wes informed everyone that he and Christal attended the Steven Nicole Salon ribbon cutting. This salon recently moved into the old Starbucks location on Church Hill Road. Wes explained that he is a long-time client of the salon and informed them that the town could hold a ribbon cutting advertising their new location. Wes expressed to members the importance of receiving feedback from businesses and to communicate opportunities to them. He continued to note that COVID safety practices are well published, but some business owners are experiencing problems with customers who refuse to comply. It is not recommended that the EDC members make comments to these customers, but it is recommended that EDC members ask business owners if there is anything else the EDC can do to help.

Residential on FH campus:

Kim Chiappetta began by telling members that the Board of Selectmen accepted the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee's recommended changes to the Fairfield Hills Master Plan. The recommendations will now be passed forward to Planning & Zoning.

Shop Small Decoration Crawl:

Kim updated members that there are approximately 25 decoration participants and that the town's GIS specialist created an interactive map that has pins showing where participating businesses are located. Barbara added that participating businesses have QR codes that provide people the ability to vote on their favorite displays. Valerie Fallon told everyone that people are also able to vote on line. On behalf Economic and Community Development, Kim thanked Parks & Rec and the GIS Specialist for being partners in this project.

Member Comments and Updates:

Barbara told Commission members that she visited the new Pleasant Paws Pet Center where she was taken on a tour of the facility and was told about the available services. She was not sure if they will be having a grand opening, but expressed the facility is phenomenal and wishes them great success. Barbara continued to tell everyone the facility has a surgery center, pet day care, training center and overnight accommodations are available. There is even a section where exotic animals can stay. They



have one of the only pet therapy baths in New England. The group discussed the huge pet contingency in Newtown and how the business compliments Tractor Supply. Wes mentioned that prior to selecting Newtown, Tractor Supply had studied the area and found many people in Newtown have dogs and horses. Barbara also stopped in Tractor Supply and was told their business is doing great. Barbara's last visit was to the new Mitchell's gas station in Hawleyville which she said was very nice.

The group discussed ways to support local businesses and Barbara told the group that she had seen little placards in New Milford saying buy local. She recommended placing small signs on Wasserman Way and Church Hill Rd. Cramer said that the news is reporting for on-line orders the chances of getting packages in time for Christmas are diminishing. Tracey Pertoso asked if there was a possibility of marketing more on social media. Kim reminded members of the current Facebook marketing and welcomed any recommendations to help the posts get more recognition. Wes recognized the good suggestions and said they could look into street signs.

Chairman and Vice Chairman Reports:

Commerce Rd Update and Next Steps:

Wes updated members that there is currently allot of interest in the 6 Commerce Road property. Two developers have submitted letters of intent even though the property still needs to be surveyed. In the January EDC meeting, Wes will go over some important details of the property so EDC members have a good understanding because eventually they will be asked to vote on a recommendation. This property is composed of 41 acres that the State gave to the town for the purpose of commercial development. Much of the property is non-developable which will remain as green space by the town. There are only 8 – 10 usable acres which is currently zoned as M-5. Barbara reminded members of the RFQ for a realtor that was published in the Newtown Bee. Wes explained that the EDC originally went out for bids and selected a realtor in an effort to do controlled advertising of the property. Unfortunately the town advised that EDC had not gone through the system incorrectly and had to advertise more broadly and go through a proper procurement RFQ. Barbara then asked if she was correct in assuming the town could move forward with a developer without a realtor being involved. Wes answered that this was correct, but the property still needs to be surveyed and marked out. Jeffrey noted if the proposed development is not an accepted use under M-5 then the property's zoning may change. Wes added that developers must bring proposals to the EDC for support, and then the EDC will forward their support to the First Selectman. He continued to explain that in January the EDC will have 2 new members, so he will probably again share the business zones map and explain the importance of sewers. He may also invite Planning Director George Benson to present and answer questions.

Wes announced to Commission members that this is Steve Gogliettino's last meeting and thanked him for his years with the EDC. All members joined Wes in thanking Steve.

Misc. cross commission activities:

There were no activities to report.



Charter Revision and possible vote:

Wes had the clerk display the Charter section 2-225 *Economic Development Commission* and explained to members that the purpose of the section is to describe the general responsibilities of the EDC. He noted that it is the responsibility of the EDC to encourage development that is in the character of the town. Planning and Zoning has some of the same interests. Wes explained that commissions are asked to review their sections of the charter every 5 years and submit recommended revisions. He then asked members to provide their thoughts.

- Jeffrey said that he looked at different commissions and they all seemed the same. He had no changes.
- Steve said he reviewed the section and didn't see any reason to change any of the language.
- Barbara had no changes.
- Valerie noted the section did not require party affiliations to be considered in selecting members. Wes explained this is covered in the overall rules that apply to everyone.
- Cramer told everyone he was fine with wording as is.
- Tracey said that she didn't anything glaring.

Cramer motioned to accept Charter page 30, section 2-225 as is. Jeffrey seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by Cramer at 7:56 p.m. and was seconded by Barbara.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*