



Economic Development Commission

MINUTES

April 19, 2022

Newtown Municipal Center
Shared Meeting Room -3
3 Primrose St

Present: Jeffrey Robinson, Valerie Fallon, Bruce Walczak, Fran Pennarola, Nick Roussas

Absent: Steve Matiatos, Barbara Snyder, Tracey Pertoso, Peter McLoughlin

Also Present: Kim Chiappetta – Economic & Community Dev & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

Public Attendance:

None.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Public Participation:

None.

Approval of Minutes:

Fran Pennarola made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from March 15, 2022. Bruce Walczak seconded. Motion passed with all in favor. Jeffrey Robinson abstained.

Economic and Community Development - Staff Updates:

In Christal Preszler's absence, Kim Chiappetta updated Commission members on the status of the proposed mixed-use project on the Fairfield Hills campus. She explained that there hasn't been any progress between SHPO and the town. SHPO is still requiring that all remaining vacant buildings remain standing. Kim is working with Christal on financials comparing the mixed-use project to a complete demo of remaining vacant buildings. A summary of this information will be presented in June Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Legislative Council meetings.

Nick Roussas asked for a status update of the Fairfield Hills Sewer Main Replacement project. Kim explained that small construction areas on the campus are for this project and most work has been taking place across from Reed Intermediate near the 2nd Governor's Horse Guard.

Members then discussed the State's requirement of 10% affordable housing and the difficulty to reach that number. As apartments with affordable units are built, the housing stock is also increased. The group continued to discuss apartments impact on schools and taxes.

Member Comments and Questions:



6 Commerce Update:

Fran said there was no update. The developer is working on a redesign and the next step will be to present it to Planning & Zoning.

Member Project(s) Update:

Fran and Bruce are working on an update to the EDC's Strategic plan. The final plan must be submitted to the Legislative Council for approval. Bruce and Fran will be sharing the current draft with the Commission for internal thoughts and comments.

Business additions resident feedback (cont'd):

None.

Vacant commercial space and Business Zones Observations:

Members discussed that the remains of King's restaurant has been demolished, the approval by Borough Zoning for a medical building at 27 Church Hill Rd and the opening of Tamarind Indian Restaurant at the 33 Main Street.

Other Commissions Observations:

Commission members discussed the former police department location. Bruce noted that there has been some interest in the location, but no movement.

Chairman & Vice Chairman reports:

Jeffrey informed the Commission of a discussion with Vice Chair Barbara Snyder and Deputy Director Christal Preszler regarding positions the EDC takes on zoning. Historically, the EDC has not taken a position unless there is a request for a business incentive. This doesn't mean that the EDC couldn't take a position if the Commission believes a project or business is in the best interest of town. The EDC's role is to encourage economic development in the properly zoned locations. The Planning & Zoning Commission has the authority to determine if projects will work as per the town's zoning regulations.

Jeffrey reminded members that EDC meetings are public and minutes are published.

Adjournment:

Jeffrey asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Fran Pennarola made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. and was seconded by Nick Roussas.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*