



MINUTES

February 20, 2018

Meeting Room 3 - 7:00pm

**Present:**

Wes Thompson, Cramer Owen, Matthew Mihalcik (7:02 p.m.), Dana Trado, Al Roznicki, Steve Gogliettino, Amy Dent, Scott Orlando, Christal Preszler – Deputy Director Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta – Economic and Community Development & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk), Jean Vetrano – Water & Sewer Authority.

**Public Participation:**

none

**Absent:**

Bob Rau, Nick Roussas

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Amy Dent motioned to amend the minutes from January 16, 2018 under the section Public Participation to delete “Frank Scinto – Gager, Emerson, Rickart, Bower & Scalzo, LLP”. Cramer Owen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Amy made a motion to accept the minutes from January 24, 2018. Matt Mihalcik seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Wes requested that future agendas do not include specific dates of minutes that require approval.

**Chairman’s Report:**

Wes Thompson first informed members of changes to the agenda sequence in an effort to better facilitate the meetings.

He then provided an update that the incentive request made by Teton Capital for an assisted living facility was approved by the Board of Selectmen. The incentive will then be presented at the Board of Finance meeting on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> for informational purposes only. Bill Donahue of Teton Capital will be attending the meetings. Wes expressed that the support if the First Selectman has be helpful in this process.



He then provided an update of the incentive request from Educational Playcare and that it will not be carried forward as the project is already underway and the First Selectman did not see justification of the incentive.

Wes informed members that he and Kim attended the Freedom of Information workshop held at the Municipal Center Tuesday, February 13th. He explained to members some key points of the presentation and complimented Amy Dent's instructions for tabling the meeting of January 16<sup>th</sup> as they were exact. Included in these points were: Voting in a Special meeting is only allowed when it is noted on the agenda; reports reviewed in a meeting do not have to be attached to the minutes, but must be made available; and requests for information must be replied to within 4 days stating that you have received the request – actual information is not due at that time. Amy recommended that in cases where an incentive applicant is providing financials that are deemed private, the group can move to an Executive Session. It was clarified by Wes that businesses may not want their information made public due to competitive situations. Cramer added that privately held companies may not want to release their financials. Wes highlighted that the mission of the EDC is to determine financial viability of the business, and that the group is not concerned with the details. The discussion ended with Wes noting that anyone can contact the Freedom of Information Commission with questions, and that he will be contacting them to ask EDC specific questions. Christal recommended asking if it is necessary to disclose businesses that have contacted her with their interest in the town. She often receives visitors asking if she has spoken with anyone else who has a business proposal similar to theirs.

The conversation shifted to changing the scope of the EDC. Wes noted that members have jobs and/or priorities and that he recognizes the difficulty in taking on tasks from EDC. With this said, at this time he will be narrowing the scope to higher priority items. He encouraged members to raise any concerns for discussion. The initial focus will be on key business areas, specifically vacant or declining property. He added that Dan Rosenthal is in agreement with this approach. He then provided an example of South Main Street's growing vacancy rate at the Sandy Hill Plaza. Christal added that there are also some vacancies in Plaza South. Christal informed members that she has been in contact with the management company for Sandy Hill Plaza offering assistance from the town.

Wes notified the Commission that Christal has come up with the idea of the EDC hosting a Fairfield County Commercial Brokers luncheon to bring to the attention of these brokers properties available in Newtown. The Fairfield County Commercial Brokers luncheons are held every 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month at noon. First Selectman, Dan Rosenthal has attended some of these meetings. One key area to prepare for this meeting will be marketing deliverables, with focus on a sheet which can be used as a hand out. Wes requested that EDC members attend this meeting, and added that it would not be held until July due to budgetary reasons. Christal confirmed that there are typically between 60 – 100 brokers in



attendance at each luncheon. Amy informed members that she has also attended these meetings, and recommended inviting CBRE (a larger commercial real estate company). Members agreed to send a personal invite to CBRE if they are not already members of the Fairfield County Commercial Brokers. The group then discussed the possibility of tours and pop-ups in the meeting.

**Economic and Community Development – Staff Updates:**

Kim Chiappetta provided status updates of tasks she is working on including:

LUCA (Local Update of Census Addresses)	Pending package from the Census Bureau
Fairfield Hills Streetscape Grant	Working with architect and landscaper to obtain documents necessary to close out grant with the state.
Fairfield Hills Campus Events	Processing event applications
Process for Identifying New Businesses	Documented high-level steps of each town department.
New business proposal meetings	Have received 3 calls and 1 visit from persons interested in opening a business in Newtown.
Stratford Hall Roof	Working on final steps in selecting a roofer.
Affordable Housing	Working on obtaining an annual report, working with an attorney on documentation, and assisted person.
Exit 10 signage	Working with engineers on sign placement.
Fact Sheet	Working on final section of school data.
Ribbon Cuttings	Will be attending two ribbon cuttings for new businesses being held Friday, February 23 <sup>rd</sup> .

Christal Prezler informed Commission members that she recently sent out the EDC newsletter which highlighted the South Main Street district as there are so many new businesses in that area. Christal visited many of these new businesses.

She then informed members of the great success of the small table outside of her office. This table is offered to Newtown businesses for free advertising. Many businesses who have used the table have expressed that they received new customers and expressed their appreciation.

Christal then provided a status of the Woodbury Hall demolition and that it will be completed within the next 2 weeks. She will be working with Fred Hurley to have the area seeded with grass once the demolition is completed. After the seed has taken, the fencing will be removed.

Amy asked for a status update on the marketing efforts by the FHA. Christal informed Amy that interest has been expressed to have a brewery on the campus. She added that the EDC has been consulted for their expertise through the process. Wes added that the EDC provides financial oversight.

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3 Primrose Street  
Newtown, CT  
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Amy expressed concerns that the FHA may not be enforcing campus design guidelines documented in the Master Plan, and that these guidelines are very specific. Christal acknowledged the importance of referring to these guidelines.

Christal informed members of upcoming events including a Legislative Session Update with Senator Hwang and Representatives Bolinsky and Duff on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the next Networking in Newtown gathering also on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at Murphy's Pub.

She let member know that a request has been received to consider Newtown businesses first for all purchases. To ensure this occurs it is necessary to look at the existing purchasing process. The group had a brief discussion regarding small purchases and what can be done.

Wes and Christal asked that members try to attend the Crash Course in Economic Development on Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Wes noted that this will probably be a broad discussion but may still be helpful.

Amy commented that she learned that towns in lower Fairfield County have put together a consortium to market their towns for commercial development.

Amy asked Jean Vetrano what the situation will be with the sewer capacity if housing projects are approved. Jean said that the Water & Sewer Authority has an application before them and it has gone to the First Selectman. Amy and Jean briefly discussed the approval process.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned by Amy at 8:13 pm and was seconded by Cramer.

*Respectfully Submitted,*                      *Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*