

SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 17, 2011 – 5:15 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 3

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Pappas, Dowling, Obrey, Mathanool, Fafard (6:35 p.m.)
Staff: Strother

Chairman Pappas called the meeting to order at 5:25 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Attorney Richard Dixon was present and noted that he had attended the EDC meeting in November to discuss the Business Park Utility Project (Flanders Road). He distributed a February 16, 2011 email message from Barbara Strother providing an update on the Project (staff noted she had also sent this email update to the Economic Development Commission). The email included an update on EDA funding, which was raised at the November meeting, and reported that the funding is regionally based and in order to apply for funding, the region must have an active Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy in place. The Southeastern Connecticut Region is currently undertaking an update of this document.

Strother further noted that for Fiscal Year 2009 (July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010) \$100,000 in additional funds to further refine the engineering design and develop more detailed costs of construction for the recommended sewer route were approved. Due to some major emergency projects, which had to be addressed by the Town, (extensive flood damage to a Route 184 bridge and River Road) this is not expected to be accomplished until later in 2012. In anticipation of a potential bond referendum in November 2013, funding is recommended in the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2013 to construct selected route segments. These cost estimates, depending upon which segments are constructed, range from \$2.2 million to \$14.1 million.

Attorney Dixon distributed a map showing the businesses in this area, the ranking sheet from the Groton Strategic Economic Development Plan, ranking this project as number 1, and fiscal year 2011 appropriations requests from Congressman Joe Courtney for various infrastructure projects in his district.

Peter Pappas felt it is important to continue to support this project and offered to attend a Town Council meeting with Attorney Dixon in the next few weeks.

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2011

MOTION: To approve the January 20, 2011 minutes, as written.

Motion made by Obrey, seconded by Pappas, so voted unanimously

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Strategic Planning Session for 2011

Staff provided an overview of the major work items she will be working on during the coming year, including continued work on the Mystic Streetscape/Utility Relocation project (currently working on electrical easements- project estimated to be completed by June 30, 2013) and the Mystic Drawbridge Rehabilitation Project (3 year project January – April 15, 2011-2013).

seCTer will also be undertaking an update to the Regional CEDS document, and the Business Development Committee, of which staff is a member, will have an active role in this process. This document is critical to applying for EDA funding in the future. Staff will also be attending an International Council of Shopping Centers marketing opportunity with staff from seCTer and other Towns in March.

An update of the Local Economic Overview will need to be undertaken (for appraisal companies, the Town's Official Statement/CAFR and for reports on development activities and potentially significant assets prepared by the Town for bonding agencies); ongoing updating and distribution of business start-up information; marketing Groton locations during any seCTer sponsored site selection familiarization visits, which are currently being considered; preparation of articles for professional publications such as the New England Real Estate Journal; business retention efforts with local businesses, and Enterprise Zone Program administration. The upcoming budget process will also involve significant effort.

A brief overview was discussed on the limited budget which staff works with in undertaking the economic development program (including \$400 for prospect development and trade show participation, \$350 for printing, including marketing materials, and \$500 for advertising in trade journals, etc.).

The Commission felt it was important to identify projects/issues that they can get involved in that do not require significant staff time.

After discussion, the following were identified as projects/issues to further consider and define the Commission's involvement:

Pfizer Outreach Efforts

UCONN Avery Point and potential partnering with Pfizer

Business Park Utility Project (Flanders Road)

OPSail

Sister City

Navy Private Development Project

It was suggested that a special meeting be held in the next few weeks to define an outreach effort to Pfizer's Site Leadership. Fafard offered to contact Pfizer to discuss this potential outreach, and Pappas offered to contact UCONN Avery Point. The special meeting will be utilized to develop wording for a letter to Pfizer requesting this meeting, and to suggest and evaluate potential discussion points (agenda) for that meeting. An EDC special meeting date of Thursday, March 7, 2011 at 5:15 p.m. at Town Hall was decided upon.

2. Staff/Commission Member Reports and Updates

Brief discussion took place on next steps for the proposed Incentives Policy update (Pappas and Fafard are to follow up with draft) and local bidding process (need to define local business and recommend a percentage above low bid for consideration prior to bringing to the Town Council).

3. Other – None

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Susan Dowling, Secretary
Economic Development Commission

Prepared by Barbara Strother
Economic Development Specialist