

**Town of East Windsor
Economic Development Commission**

**11 Rye Street, P.O. Box 389
Broad Brook, CT 06016**

Website: <http://www.eastwindsorct.com>

***Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 16, 2015***

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Members Present: Eric Moffett, Andy Hoffman and Jim Richards

Also in Attendance: Laurie Whitten, Town Planner
Roger O'Brien, Economic Development Consultant

Chairman Eric Moffett called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. at the East Windsor Town Hall meeting room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was no public participation

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: To approve the minutes of February 23, 2015.
Hoffman / Richards

In Favor: Hoffman, Richards

Abstain: Moffett

IV. GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Economic Development Consultant

Economic Development Consultant Roger O'Brien spoke about his background and experience. Ms. Whitten explained that Mr. O'Brien has expressed interest in meeting with all of the members. He wants to come up with a market plan for the Town and to update the action agenda. Chairman Moffett asked what the Board of Selectmen have in mind for the scope of work. He said we need to get it down to something achievable. Mr. Richards said at this point the things that we found from Andy Hoffman's business visits and memos should give him a starting point.

Ms. Whitten said that on the update of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) they are currently focusing on the Route 5 corridor. She suggested that Mr. O'Brien become involved in that and drive up and down and see what is there. She noted that the consultant for the POCD has prepared a plan that shows a picture of every parcel on Route 5 and did a synopsis of every use that is there. She distributed copies of the plans.

Mr. O'Brien said he wants to start by listening. He said he is hoping to sit down with each of the EDC members to see what their opinions are regarding the Town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Mr. Richards said a lot of the direction is in the POCD. It gives a strong view of what we want. One of his concerns is competition with other towns such as Windsor Locks. He said he would like us to have the same opportunities. The Bradley Airport Development Zone is something that we should be finding a way to go after the State to change. He also brought up the Transit Oriented Development District. He said we should also look at the Warehouse Point area. That is a very under-taxed market place. He said we have a lot of traffic coming from surrounding towns, such as Enfield, Ellington and Somers, that we are not tracking.

Mr. Moffett said Mr. O'Brien brings a global perspective to East Windsor. He has connections outside of East Windsor, such as MetroHartford Alliance.

Ms. Whitten passed out copies of information regarding Four Seasons Farm. She explained that they do hydroponic farming and use high tech greenhouses designed in Holland. They expressed an interest in coming to the Skylark Airport property. They are looking for some kind of tax incentives. She said she has asked Mr. O'Brien to look into it and he has been researching it.

Ms. Whitten noted that casinos are coming to Connecticut and we are on the radar as a possible community. She said there are pros and cons and we need to be educated. Mr. Richards said one fear is that they open in Windsor Locks and we get the traffic.

There was further discussion regarding the Four Seasons Farm. Mr. O'Brien said it is a good opportunity. It is a large potential investment in the Town. They are projected to create 35 new jobs for the first phase and potentially 350 jobs in the future. Mr. O'Brien indicated that there is a State Statute that allows the towns to give 50% tax abatements for hydroponic farming. He talked about the EDC going to the Board of Selectmen to develop some guidelines that if you are a new business to the Town and met certain criteria, then we would be supportive of a tax incentive program. Mr. O'Brien

suggested that he and Laurie Whitten draft something for the EDC's review and comments which will then go to the Board of Selectmen. He said they need to get this done soon.

MOTION: To authorize staff to draft guidelines for a proposed economic development tax incentive for hydroponic farming, to provide to the Economic Development Commission for review.

Richards / Hoffman / Unanimous

At this point in the meeting (7:10 p.m.) Andy Hoffman left the meeting. Since there was no longer a quorum, the meeting was officially over. For the remainder of the meeting, an informal discussion took place.

Signs at Newberry and Thompson Roads

Ms. Whitten reported that she found out today from the State DOT that we can't put a sign in the State right-of-way. It was never allowed. Mr. Richards expressed concern that many people have relied on the directory sign to find the businesses. He said he would like staff to write a letter to the DOT complaining that this type of thing is not good to promote business in Town. He also suggested that a letter be sent to the businesses telling them why then can't have the sign. Mr. O'Brien suggested getting all of the businesses to sign a petition and sending it to the Governor. Ms. Whitten said she will write a letter to the DOT.

The meeting ended at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Bauer
Recording Secretary