

**Town of East Windsor
Economic Development Commission**

11 Rye Street
Broad Brook, CT. 06016

Regular Meeting
Monday, January 25, 2016
Town Hall Meeting Room, 6:00 p.m.

******* Draft Document subject to Commission Review/Approval*******

Members Present: Josh Kapelner (Vice Chairman), Andy Hoffman, William Kehoe, and Jim Richards.

Members Absent: Eric Moffett, and Marie Rumore

Guests: Laurie Whitten, Town Planner; and Robert Maynard, First Selectman;

Vice Chairman Kapelner called the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

A quorum was established with three Regular and one Alternate Member present.

MOTION: To APPROVE Bill Kehoe as a voting member for the Meeting this evening.

Hoffman moved/Kapelner seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/ December 14, 2015 REGULAR MEETING:

MOTION: To APPROVE the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission dated December 14, 2015 as presented.

Richard moved/Hoffman seconded/**DISCUSSION:** None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Small Business Center:

Mr. Hoffman reported a meeting was held with Denise Whitford of the UCONN Small Business Development Center; Ms. Whitford offered assistance through the UCONN SBDC for local businesses seeking grants and other resources. Mr. Hoffman reported he has spoken with Ms.

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Whitford again regarding additional information. Mr. Kehoe questioned what Ms. Whitford thought she could do for our local Small Business Center? Mr. Hoffman suggested she could relate how other cities and towns work with their businesses; he suggested Ms. Whitford would be a resource for our Small Business Center to work with local businesses to research and then direct them to contacts to seek help with their questions or problems. Mr. Hoffman is proposing that the Small Business Center hold an initial meeting with a number of small businesses at which the center's mission statement and the purpose of the center can be acknowledged. Mr. Hoffman sought Mr. Richard's assistance identifying businesses to invite to the initial meeting.

Mr. Hoffman reported that he had provided the Commission with two documents: 1) a timeline or schedule for developing the Small Business Center, and 2) a Small Business Center Mission Statement and outline of points on which the Small Business Center may assist businesses. Discussion followed regarding the following focus points:

1. **To assist businesses navigate through the town permitting and regulation process:** Mr. Richards felt those issues were being handled by the Planning and Zoning Office presently. Town Planner Whitten concurred, noting as use of View Permit develops it will make the permitting process easier. She also suggested the Planning Department can develop a list of items which require permits; that information can be made available via various sources. Vice Chairman Kapelner suggested he would like to see businesses offered a package of information electronically. Mr. Hoffman suggested he had planned to offer businesses a
2. logic/flow chart directing businesses through the business development process. First Selectmen Maynard suggested he would like to see a person come forward to discuss their business proposal and be directed to those departments that can assist them; he would like the town to embrace them. Discussion continued regarding current regulation requirements and understanding the purpose of those regulations, vs. the effect of those regulations on business promotion. *(The initial consensus of the Commission was this item is currently handled by the Planning Department and should be removed from the responsibility list for the Small Business Center. Vice Chairman Kapelner would like to see a periodic update from the Planning Office to the EDC regarding progress.)*
3. **Research processes that can aid local businesses:** Mr. Hoffman suggested volunteers, such as available members of the EDC, could assist with the initial research. Discussion followed regarding the mission/purpose of the EDC vs. the Small Business Center. Mr. Richards cited concern that the Small Business Center would be overlapping with responsibilities of the EDC. *(The initial consensus of the Commission was to continue this bullet as a responsibility of the Small Business Center)*
4. **Bring issues that trouble companies to the attention of local and State government:** Mr. Richards cited concern with the Small Business Center dealing with zoning issues. He suggested perhaps businesses should be encouraged to come to regular EDC Meetings to present their questions/issues via the Public Participation agenda item. Discussion followed regarding the benefits of the Small Business Center meeting with businesses as a means of retaining businesses.

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5. **Provide assistance interfacing with State agencies that can provide help to East Windsor businesses:** Mr. Hoffman suggested the intent would be for the Small Business Center to assist with research via CRCOG, Metro Hartford, etc. when a business owner may not have time to do the research themselves. Mr. Kehoe suggested adding “Town and State agencies” to bullet #2.
6. **Assist with presentations that define a business’s needs and position on issues:** Mr. Hoffman suggested members of the Small Business Center could prepare a short presentation to be made to whatever agency is necessary on behalf of the business. The presentation should include what the business was asking for and what they expected in the way of answers. Mr. Richards questioned the value of creating a separate Small Business Center rather than strengthening the purpose of the EDC and the Planning and Zoning Department? First Selectman Maynard suggested he felt the Small Business Center would be a resource to assist the businesses. Town Planner Whitten suggested the Small Business Center could meet with the businesses to discuss the issues. Discussion continued regarding the availability of EDC members vs. volunteers for the Small Business Center to meet with business owners. First Selectman Maynard felt this bullet should remain the responsibility of the Small Business Center.

MOTION: For the EDC members to take the list prepared by Andy Hoffman and review it and prepare for the next EDC Meeting their recommendations as to which responsibilities fall to the EDC and which fall to the Small Business Center.

Richards moved/Kehoe seconded/

DISCUSSION: Mr. Hoffman cited the need to move forward with the proposed timeline.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous.

Mr. Hoffman suggested holding a Special Meeting to move forward with the schedule presented for the Small Business Center. Mr. Hoffman suggested the EDC needs to decide if it wants to continue with the development of the Small Business Center.

AMENDED MOTION: For the EDC to hold a Special Meeting on February 8th (and cancel the Regular Meeting scheduled for February 22nd).

Kapelner moved/Kehoe seconded/

DISCUSSION: First Selectman Maynard noted a Budget Workshop is scheduled for that evening. Staff suggested the EDC Meeting could be held in the Planning Office.

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VOTE: In Favor: Hoffman/Kapelner/Kehoe
Opposed: Richards
Abstained: No one

Casino:

Discussion followed regarding the status of East Windsor's submission of the South Main Street site proposed for development by Centerplan. Discussion continued regarding the viability of other sites submitted by surrounding towns or cities. Mr. Richards cited concern for the effect on East Windsor's infrastructure and safety relative to the selection of any of the surrounding sites. He suggested the Board of Selectmen should send the State a letter requiring that they pay compensation to surrounding towns for infrastructure improvements related to the casino development. Discussion followed regarding the timing of such a letter as the MMCT hasn't yet chosen a site.

MOTION: That the EDC request the Board of Selectmen to send a letter to the State requiring that the State compensate surrounding towns for infrastructure improvements required as a result of the casino development.

Kehoe moved/Richards seconded/

DISCUSSION: Vice Chairman Kapelner questioned if the letter should be sent before the State decides if a casino will be built? Mr. Richards felt this request should be included in the discussions held by the State. Mr. Hoffman felt sending the letter was premature.

VOTE: In Favor: Kapelner/Kehoe/Richards
Opposed: Hoffman
Abstained: No one.

Election of Officers:

MOTION: To POSTPONE the Election of Officers to the EDC Special Meeting scheduled for February 8, 2016.

Richards moved/Hoffman seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

MOTION: That the EDC send a request to the Board of Selectmen to remove Maria Rumore as a member of the EDC, and to request the appointment of William Kehoe as a Regular Member of the EDC when the Board of Selectmen completes the notification to Ms. Rumore.

Richards moved/Hoffman seconded/

DISCUSSION: The requirements for removal of a member were discussed.

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VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Discussion of Economic Development Issues:

Town Planner Whitten presented the EDC with a copy of the proposed budgets for the Economic Development Commission and the Small Business Center. She noted the presentation for these budgets to the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Thursday, February 11th; she requested members of the EDC to attend to support the budget requests.

LET THE RECORD SHOW Vice Chairman Kapelner left the Meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Mr. Richards reported Noble East Gas Station will be having a Grand Opening soon.

Mr. Kehoe questioned if anyone has approached the Planning Office regarding development of property on the corner of Wells Road and Route 140? Town Planner Whitten reported a business owner has approached the Planning Office for advice on the potential for developing this site.

Town Planner Whitten reported she attended the Farmington EDC Breakfast last week. The keynote speaker was Bob Landino, CEO of Centerplan.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Kehoe moved/Richards seconded/VOTE: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted:

Peg Hoffman, Substitute Recording Secretary, East Windsor Economic Development Commission.