

**DRAFT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

MINUTES

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

The Town of Bloomfield Economic Development Commission held a Regular Meeting on April 14, 2015 scheduled for 8:30 A.M. at the Town Hall in Bloomfield, Connecticut with the following members present:

Present:
Harold Harper
Fred Hesketh
Michelle Bononi
Jerry Katrichis

Also Present: José Giner
Philip Schenck
Joan Gamble
Rob Rowson
Mike Goman
Dale Bertoldi
Rich Hughes

José Giner noted that both the Chair and Vice-Chair could not attend today's meeting. *Michelle Bononi moved to appoint Jerry Katrichis as Temporary Chairman for this meeting. Harold Harper seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.*

Mr. Katrichis opened the meeting at 8:37 and called for a motion on the minutes of March 17, 2015.

Minutes of March 17, 2015

Fred Hesketh moved to adopt the minutes of March 17, 2015 as offered. Harold Harper seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Summary of FY 2015-2016 Capital Improvement Budget

Philip Schenck went over the proposed Capital Improvement Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 which will be voted on at the May 4 Annual Town meeting to be held at the Bloomfield High School. Among the specific items noted were:

- Wintonbury GC may enclose patio for banquets etc. Michelle Bononi asked if we were getting away from the course being self-funded. Mr. Schenck said that was not the case and that we had a positive balance of \$90,000 this past year. He is not sure how the winter delay would affect the bottom line this year. There are some discussions on being able to keep some of the staff on board year-round. It is difficult to retain a consistent staff since they are currently hired on a seasonal basis.
- The start of the Streetscape program for the town center will be dependent on what plans the new owners may have for the Wintonbury Mall.
- The CIP has \$30,000 to update the Tuthill & Wells Study regarding the Town's options on the Library renovation or new construction.
- Filley Park improvements are programmed for \$375,000 as a seed for Phase 2. The cost for Phase 2 work is estimated to amount to \$1.2 million. Phase 1 work is going out to bid by June.
- There is \$75,000 programed for Town Green improvements. At this point the Town plans on holding back any substantive action until we get a better idea of what the future may hold for Wintonbury Mall and to better gauge the scope and timing of any intersection improvements by ConnDOT.
- Blue Hills Ave. Streetscape – We are hoping that the Legislature approves \$500,000 for improvements at the Hartford city line north. The 30K in the CIP is seed money for preliminary design. Mike Goman stated that his firm had been signed by the City of Hartford to do an Economic Development Study for North Blue Hills Ave. There was an opportunity for coordination whenever the Town starts its work.

Discussion Regarding Wintonbury Mall:

Mike Goman gave an update on the status of the property. He had spoken with one of the property managers at KeyPoint Partners and there was nothing much more to report. There was still no date set for the anticipated auction of the property. He noted that the liquidator, LNR, may not be as anxious to bring the property to quick auction since the property is able to pay all its debts out of a positive cash flow. He noted that Goman+York was helping the Town

put together an information packet for potential investors in anticipation of the property being brought to auction.

Staff and Commission Member Update on Various Topics of Interest:

Update on Center Apartments project.

José Giner stated that he had met with Paul Butler the previous week and that he indicated that they were close to picking out the developer partner for the middle piece which was about 208 units. The Tax Abatement Agreement and Jobs Set Aside had been finalized by the Town and we were waiting on word from the developers regarding scheduling a signing.

Filley Park Update

José Giner stated that the bids for Phase 1 would go soon and that he anticipated a July start on construction.

East Coast Greenway

Mr. Giner stated that Jonathan was working on resolving right-of-way liability issues with Eversource.

Other Projects

Mr. Giner reported that new construction had begun on the Brighton Park Apartments on Woodland Ave. He also stated that he and David Driver had been in contact with an out of town firm that was interested in vacant building on Britton Dr. There was also some interest in a parcel in Phoenix Crossing for a large distribution company. He and the Town Manager would attend a site visit with representatives of the potential business and Griffin Land.

Center Merchants

Rob Rowson updated the EDC on the efforts to organize the merchants in the center. He noted that there was a good turnout at the March meeting. The next meeting will be on April 20 at 8:30 at Carbone's Kitchen and Police Chief Paul Hammick had been invited to speak and answer questions. Dale Bertoldi asked if the Town had looked into the State Program regarding Main Street investment funding. Phil Schenck replied that we will investigate it but was not sure that the merchants group was far enough along in its organization yet.

Jerry Katrichis offered to have his marketing class at the University of Hartford help out with the center marketing efforts.

Other

Dale Bertoldi stated that the Town should pursue getting Certified Local Government Status from the State Historic preservation office. He stated that this would open doors for possible funding sources for some of the Town Green work. Phil Schenck asked if there was an inventory of historic places. Mr. Bertoldi said that there was a preliminary list. Mr. Schenck said that the Town could look into obtaining Certified Local Government Status. He felt that it would be good to document the "hidden treasures" in Bloomfield. Fred Hesketh said that there is a publication put out by the Wintonbury Historical Society called "Over the Tunxis Trail" that would be a good resource.

Dale Bertoldi stated that he would like to explore the possibility of short-term "pop-ups" in vacant spaces with the Wintonbury Mall management. Mike Goman stated that at someone from the school system had asked in the past that we contact Mall management regarding art-space pop-ups.

Michelle Bononi expressed concern regarding the status of residential blight inspections. She was under the impression that the ZEO was focused primarily on commercial property complaints. She did not feel that a complaint based system is adequate for handling zoning or blight problems. Ms. Bononi felt that the Town needed another dedicated person to handle these issues.

Adjournment

There being no other business, Mr. Katrichis thanked everyone for attending.

Fred Hesketh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:50. The motion was seconded by Harold Harper and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
José Giner