

Town of Bloomfield
Economic Development Commission Meeting
800 Bloomfield Avenue, Conference Room #2
DRAFT MINUTES
TUESDAY, May 10, 2016

Present: Jerry Long, Bonnie Bercowetz, Michelle Bononi, Fred Hesketh, Jerry Katrichis, Richard McDermott.

Not Present: Harold Harper

Also present: Director of Planning and Economic Development Director, José Giner, Philip Schenck, Town Manager, Mayor Joan Gamble, Deputy Mayor Syd Schulman, Councilman Joel Neuwirth, Don Poland, Dave Driver, Rob Rowson, Mike Goman, Dale Bertoldi, Rich Hughes, Todd Warner, Kevin Gough, Ruthanne Marchetti, Quincey Gill and Laura James, Recording Secretary

1. Chairman Long called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
2. **Minutes of April 12, 2016 regular meeting**
Commissioner Bercowetz made a motion to accept the minutes of April 12, 2016 & April 28, 2016. Commissioner McDermott seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
3. **Public Comment**
No comments
4. **Discussion of Possible Changes to Liquor Regulations for the Town Center**
Mr. Poland stated he has been looking at the gap analysis for economic development opportunities in the Town center and found that we could use more food and entertainment businesses. He stated that one of the impediments to bringing in more high-end restaurants was the separation requirements for alcohol related uses in the center. Mr. Poland stated that he had suggested some changes to liquor regulations in the Town Center which he distributed at the last meeting. Mr. Poland stated liquor regulations in Section 74C of the Zoning Regulations regulated the separation distances between existing liquor licenses as well as separation distances from residential areas, schools, churches and libraries. For each of the provisions where there is a separation distances. Mr. Poland proposed a final sentence that these provisions would not be applied to the BCD Zone which is the Town Center. The separation distances would stay in affect elsewhere in the community. Mr. Poland hopes the Commission would support such a change. Mr. Poland stated they would be available for a public hearing with the Planning Commission.
Commissioner Bercowetz asked if the regulation is similar to the Blue Law. Mr. Poland stated this regulation is very common in the State of Connecticut and it is becoming less over time. He noted that the days are gone where you would have a bar with no food. There are more bars and restaurants now where food and drink are served. He noted that communities have started to be more flexible on these types of regulations and some are even eliminating them.
Commissioner Katrichis asked how specifically the BCD is defined. Mr. Giner stated it is a zoning designation on the map from Geisslers down to Gabb Road on the north-south axis and from the Ocean State Plaza on the west to Amazing Plaza to the east.
Chairman Long asked the Commission what they would like to do regarding the regulation change. Mr. Giner asked if the EDC wants to go on record saying they are in support of the regulation change and bring before the Planning Commission. Mr. Schenck stated the Town Attorney would review any language changes.

Commissioner Bononi made a motion to support the elimination of the separation requirements within the BCD Zone and leaving the language for the Town Attorney to make changes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hesketh and carried unanimously.

5. Discussion of need for Public Facilities Survey and Analysis

Commissioner Bercowetz stated this came about in conjunction with the proposal of a new library. The concern is when looking at a bond issue that everything is taken into consideration and included in the bond. Commissioner Bercowetz asked if the Town has completed a Capital Improvement Study. Mr. Schenck stated the Town does have a Capital Improvement Plan. It is a five-year plan which has to be reviewed and approved each budget cycle. The Town also has a Comprehensive Development Plan which is a ten-year requirement of the State which has to be approved by TPZ. Mr. Schenck stated public facilities are usually part of the ten-year Comprehensive Development Plan and feeds into the five-year capital improvement budget. Mr. Schenck stated from a practical standpoint, it gets very little review and has only surfaced because of the proposal for a new Library. A Center Study was done in 2013 and accepted by the Town Council which reinforced the location of the Library, Town Hall, and Police Department being located in the Town Center, but it is not to say that it is cast in concrete. Mr. Schenck stated each year the Capital Improvement Budget has to be submitted for review by Town Plan and Zoning Commission. This was done at the April meeting of the Town Plan and Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Bononi asked who authors the Capital Improvement Plan and how can one get a copy. Mr. Schenck stated the Department Heads submit their requisitions to the Town Manager and the Manager then reviews them with the Planner and Finance Director. The Manager then submits a recommended Capital Improvement Plan and Budget to the Town Council. The Council makes recommendations of potential changes. The entire recommended budget is then submitted to the voters at the annual Town meeting. Commissioner Bononi asked if the Council has authority to change the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Schenck stated yes, it is part of the budget process. Mr. Schenck stated the document is on the Town's webpage. There was further discussion with Town Manager, Philip Schenck, Mr. Goman, and the Commission regarding Capital Improvement Planning, capital reserves, delay of maintenance of Town buildings and its economic impact on taxpayers.

Commissioner Bononi made a motion that, after an independent review of the existing Capital Improvement Plan by members of the EDC Commission, the EDC should pursue discussion of a public facilities survey and analysis report and move to provide an overview report with participants in the discussion to include the Finance Director, Economic Development Commission and staff, Town Manager and Planning Consultants. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bercowetz and carried unanimously.

6. Staff and Commission Member Update on Various Topics of Interest

a. New and ongoing construction

Mr. Giner stated that his Department took in \$500,000 in permit revenue during April. He reported that projects include a new dental office in Copaco Center. The Building Department continues to issue permits for townhouses at Brighton Park. Also, a Medical fit out at 2 Northwestern Drive; a small connector between two buildings at Kaman; Deringer Ney is doing interior fit out for their new facility; 580 Cottage Grove Road is completing a \$1.2million dollar surgical fit out; MDC is constructing a new blower building at #6 Reservoir; The new CREC school construction continues at Turkey Hill Road; the Town Plan and Zoning Commission and wetlands have approved a new CREC high school on Griffin Road North. Mr.

Giner reported that the Town Plan and Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission have approved permits for solar carports and solar arrays for Seabury and First Cathedral. He also reported that Niagara Bottling is doing a lot of work on Woodland Ave. including pre-casting walls on site. Mr. Giner stated that the Town Center Apartments are due to close by the end of June. Cigna continues to spend funds on improvements to their campus. Mr. Giner also stated that he is expecting plans for 140 units of market rate elderly housing on Blue Hills Ave. from Calamar Assoc. Also 41 units of subsidized elderly apartments on Douglas Street have received all local Board approvals and are awaiting final financing before submitting for building permits.

b. Wintonbury Mall

Mr. Giner stated that the Town had previously approved an Urgent Care Center at the Mall. He reported that he had a meeting with leasing agent of Wintonbury Mall and it looks like the urgent care center is back on track for a lease at the Mall.

Mr. Goman stated the lease for the Urgent Care Center will be about 4,000 square feet. He reported that they are also looking at a professional new staffing agent which will be a 6,000 square foot tenant. The mall is also negotiating with a religious group from Fairfield CT as well as a small jazz club restaurant which may be taking on some interior space. Mr. Rowson stated they are well on way to getting some new tenants.

c. Filley Park

Mr. Giner stated now that the weather is better the contractor can go out and finish the first phase. The Town will be sending out bid documents by the end of the month for the Phase II improvements. Phase II will hopefully be finished this year. The Town can then concentrated on Phase III next year. In addition to Town funding a Committee has been formed and will be busy coming up with fundraisers and sponsorship to raise monies.

**d. Goman & York
Marketing**

Mr. Goman stated they are freshening up marketing materials and will be ready in next couple weeks. They are working with Landlords in the area and have re-established contact with the owner of the Ocean State Job Lot. Mr. Driver has a convention in New Haven in September as part of marketing program will have a booth there. Going forward will have alternative ideas of how to expand marketing and budget ideas to review with Mr. Giner and Mr. Schenck.

Bloomfield Center Business Alliance

Mr. Rowson stated the next meeting of the merchants group will be Monday, May 16, 2016, 8:30 a.m. The Merchant Group has asked to change format and include a general list of things happening in Town. Mr. Rowson stated that they are extending invitations for membership to the Geissler Plaza tenants.

Etc.

Mr. Goman stated that he would be attending the International Council Shopping Center Convention in Las Vegas this year. Mr. Goman stated it is a good convention for networking with national retailers.

e. Other topics

Mr. Giner stated there was a presentation of students on marketing under the direction of Commissioner Katrichis. Mr. Giner passed out a copy of the results to the Commission. Mr.

Katrichis stated the student's recommendation was to unify branding and have a more consistent brand.

Commissioner Bercowetz stated she is concerned with the timing of the Capital Improvement budget and when the Commission becomes involved.

Commissioner Bercowetz suggested setting a date for a retreat for the Commission to discuss EDC's role. Mr. Goman stated they provide sessions in other Town's regarding EDC's role and priorities of EDC and what that the community thinks EDC's focus should be and can have this in Bloomfield if EDC wants it. Commissioner Bononi stated that things are changing in Bloomfield and that the EDC is becoming very important. However she feels that the EDC has never defined its role. The EDC needs to look at what its function is and where the EDC is going. Chairman Long asked Mr. Giner to add this on the agenda for next month.

7. Public Comment

Ms. Ruthanne Marchetti, Bloomfield Avenue, stated the Library should be kept in the Center of Town. Ms. Marchetti stated she has documents as to the economic development impact on the Library in the Center.

Mr. Dale Bertoldi stated the Library is an anchor in the Town Center. EDC should voice concerns to the Council. He stated that he will be writing a letter to the Town Council regarding the Library.

Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Drive, Mr. Gough stated he thinks the Library should be in the Town Center. He stated that by deferring funding of maintenance for Town buildings you end up paying a lot more in the long run. Mr. Gough asked EDC to look at reserve funding and not always relying on bonding to pay for capital projects. He felt that the public works garage is a disgrace and should have been taken care of years ago.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Bercowetz made a motion to adjourn at 10:00 a.m. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Katrichis and carried unanimously.