

DRAFT

Town of Bloomfield  
Economic Development Commission Meeting  
800 Bloomfield Avenue, Conference Room #5  
MINUTES  
Tuesday, May 12, 2015

**Present:** Bonnie Bercowetz, Michele Bononi, Joan Gamble, Fred Hesketh, Jerry Katrichis, Jerry Long, Rich McDermott, Harold Harper

**Also present:** Dale Bertoldi, David Driver, José Giner, Mike Gorman, Donald Poland, Rob Rowson, Philip Schenck and Sydney Schulman

Chairman Long called the meeting to order at 8:33am.

Minutes of April 14, 2015 were tabled until the next meeting.

Motion was made and passed unanimously to add three items to the published agenda: 1.) Discussion on Gillette Ridge; 2.) Branding and Naming for Town Center and Subcommittee to work on it.; ( 3.) Shared, alternate parking in the town center.

**Wintonbury Mall**

Mike Gorman reported that the auction is scheduled for July 2. He has been in touch with John Kane regarding the website posting of auction he also reported that he has received six phone calls regarding the auction and its process. Most of the interested parties appear to be opportunistic buyers who were unaware of the bidding process. He stated he is unable to answer inquiries as there is not information on the website. Mr. Gorman will respond to inquiries via email once he receives more information.

**Center Apartment Project**

José Giner reported that the center 1 apartment project was moving forward. He has met with representatives of Post Road Residential, Inc., the Fairfield county developers who are in charge of the project. He stated that they have a good track record of providing upper end high quality apartments, financing is forthcoming and due diligence is being conducted. Ground breaking is slated for the first quarter of 2016. The project will be developed in phases; the first phase of 208 units to be built behind Bloomfield and Jerome Avenues with millennials with good jobs not looking for home ownership as a target audience.

**Filley Park**

Mr. Giner reported that the Filley Park project is ready to begin receiving bids on construction of the selected benches. He stated that the budget that was passed includes capital improvement to do additional work to fully implement the plan. A formal ground breaking will be planned once the bid is awarded.

**Town Green**

Mr. Giner reported that the following items and issues were discussed pertaining to the Town Green:

- The possibility of extending the Town Green into the mall
- Increase amount of usable space on the Green
- Move monuments closer to the street and in one location to create a “memorial garden”.

- Replace trees and redesign the area to include tables and seating

He stated that they were a lot of balls in the air regarding the Town Green and mall and stressed the importance of all entities to work together to make sure we don't create inefficiencies.

### **Merchants Association**

Rob Rowson reported that town center merchants were looking at branding and creating a logo. A professional marketing firm could be hired for \$3500 to create a marketing strategy and could work with a sub-committee of the EDC. Michele Bononi suggested the marketing firm revisit the original Bloomfield Center Plan. Mr. Rowson stated that the merchants and the EDC should work together on branding and now was a good time to start the process and begin the conversations about the various plans. Bonnie Bercowetz stated that it was important for the merchants to engage as many people as possible, while Ms. Bononi cautioned that the involvement of so many individuals would cause a delay and reiterated the sense of urgency for a plan to be ready by fall 2015. Mr. Rowson stated that the merchants were meeting on May 18 at Carbone's and the meeting would determine their involvement and commitment. Mr. Giner will work to bring members of both groups together.

*Motion was moved by Michelle Bononi, seconded by Jerri Katrichis and passed unanimously that the committee would wait for the merchants report before taking any action. Mr. Rowson will give the EDC an update at the next meeting.*

### **Gillette Ridge**

Ms. Bercowetz informed members of an article that appeared in the Hartford Business Journal announcing that CIGNA was foreclosing on the Gillette Ridge Golf Course. The commissioners stated that while they were aware of problems with the course and its management, this was the first they had heard of a foreclosure, therefore they could not confirm or deny the article. Questions were raised about the property owners' rights under their declarations. Phil Schenk will investigate and report his findings.

### **Parking**

Ms. Bononi led a discussion on the various parking options and zoning regulations regarding shared and alternative parking and referred to Article VI of the Bylaws and Zoning Regulations. She stated the need for clarification on: parking regulations regarding new projects versus existing businesses; who has authority to approve changes; and the need for a vehicle that is user friendly to assist applicants in addressing the issues. Ms. Bononi reported that currently there are 3340 parking spaces in the town center and the new plan parking regulations require 6340 spaces. She stated that parking was a key component in the pedestrian study. Discussion included: public spaces; individually owned lots, opening the Town Hall parking lot to allow public parking during off hours; the challenge of applying shared parking retroactively. Ms. Bononi asked that a sub-committee be convened to review and prepare recommendations to be presented to the TPZ.

*Motion was moved by Michelle Bononi, seconded by Rich McDermott and passed unanimously to create a sub-committee to review parking regulations. The committee comprised of Bonnie Bercowetz, Fred Hesketh, Rich McDermott and Michele Bononi will make a recommendation at the next EDC meeting.*

### **Updates on Various Topics**

Don Poland addressed the issue of what uses should the Town be encouraging to come to the center. A prior Gap Analysis showed a \$16m gap in hospitality spending in the Town Center. He stated that the current alcohol restrictions limit additional restaurant growth and is having a negative impact on hospitality revenue. He also stated that the Town Center could handle an additional 4-5 restaurants and clustering restaurants is beneficial to all and would be welcomed by current business owners.

Mr. Giner reported that the EDC workshop held last week was well presented and that the attendance was good. Discussion centered on the function of EDC's. He will provide Commissioners with copies of the power point presentation.

Mr. Giner reported that he and Philip Schenck met with Marie McDonald and EverSource Representatives regarding a program on assisting businesses with energy audits and efficiencies. Mr. Schenck reported that the program is an extension of their home owners program. Once the program is further developed EverSource representatives will be invited to a future EDC meeting.

Mr. Giner stated that he would recommend that the TPZ the EDC and various boards meet once a year to review plans, goals and timelines for implementing elements of the Plan of Conservation and Development .

Fred Hesketh asked Mr. Giner to provide an update on the roundabouts which he promised to do at the next meeting.

Dale Bertoldi, Ironworks Community Partners stated he would like to see the Town of Bloomfield work with CIGNA, whose CEO is a biker by creating a bike path in the tunnel under Cottage Grove Road and promote the Live Work Play concept and reduce the amount of traffic going into CIGNA's campus to create more bike friendly paths. He stated that now is a great opportunity for the town to create additional sidewalks along Bloomfield Avenue. Mr. Bertoldi suggested that the town request a meeting with CIGNA's CEO to discuss the idea. Mr. Schenck stated that there is a recreation master plan study completed last October that looked at the interconnectedness through town. He reported that \$60,000 was budgeted to review vehicular, traffic and green spaces within the town and would begin once the Mall project is complete. Ms. Bononi stated that the EDC should be involved with the interconnectedness study once it begins.

***Fred Hesketh moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:45am. The motion was seconded by Michelle Bononi and passed unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Steinle, Corresponding Secretary