

Town of Bloomfield
Economic Development Commission Meeting
800 Bloomfield Avenue, Conference Room #2
DRAFT MINUTES
TUESDAY, June 14, 2016

Present: Bonnie Bercowetz, Michelle Bononi, Fred Hesketh, and Jerry Katrichis, Richard McDermott,
Not Present: Harold Harper, Jerry Long

Also present: Director of Planning and Economic Development Director, Jose' Giner, Philip Schenck, Town Manager, Mayor Joan Gamble, Don Poland, Dave Driver, Rob Rowson, Dale Bertoldi, Rich Hughes, Joel Neuwirth.

1. Commissioner Bercowetz called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. **Minutes of May 10, 2016 regular meeting**

Commissioner Bononi made a motion to accept the minutes of May 10, 2016 with a correction. Commissioner Hesketh seconded the motion, and passed unanimously.

3. **Public Comment**

No comments

4. **Discussion of Capital Improvement Plan and Budgeting**

Commissioner Bononi stated the Capital Improvement Plan which was sent by Mr. Giner was reviewed. Commissioner Bercowetz asked if the plan was helpful to any of the Commission members.

Commissioner Bononi stated it was helpful and informative with regard to other things that need to be done. Commissioner Bononi stated the Commission did not have information regarding the ranking of projects for the Town, which made it very difficult to make a decision on the Library Project. Mr. Schenck stated each of the projects has a project description sheet, a full page. Mr. Schenck also stated the Capital Improvement Program is a lot more detailed. Commissioner Bononi stated if the Commission could have had the one-page project description sheet they would have been better positioned to make a more informed decision regarding the Library. Mr. Giner stated he spoke with Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics who prepared a facilities analysis for the Town of Branford on each building that states the expected life use, the condition, and time frame when each building needs to be repaired or replaced.

Mr. Schenck stated they have detailed reports on every building that has come in for funding prepared by the Facilities Department. He stated that if anyone would like to sit in on the budget hearings this fall he welcomes the Commission to do so.

Commissioner Bercowetz stated they would like to attend and be more involved at the beginning of the process.

Commissioner Bercowetz asked Mr. Schenck to give the Commission at least the top ten projects. Mr. Schenck also invited the Commission to attend the next Finance Sub-Committee meeting. Commissioner Bononi asked Mr. Giner if the Commission could have the detailed Capital Improvement Sheets for Library, DPW, and 330 Park Avenue.

Commissioner Bononi stated this Commission has been a receiver of information and not a request generator and the Commission needs to be more pro-active. Commissioner Bononi further stated the Commission has to keep in mind that, while it may be a great time to borrow

money, who is going to pay the bill? She stated that when residents and businesses look to locate in Bloomfield, the debt is one of the first things that is looked at. Commissioner Bononi requested that the brief summary of Capital Improvement Sheets be sent to the Commission for review for DPW, Library, Human Services Center, and Town Communication System.

Mr. Schenck stated that he questions the Commission getting heavily involved in the Capital Budget Prioritization and Planning Projects. Commissioner Bercowetz stated the EDC's role is to represent the Community and get input from the community. Commissioner Bercowetz stated the Commission wants to be helpful and support projects but they also need to be educated prior to making recommendations.

Discussion of the mission and role of the EDC

Commissioner Bercowetz stated her recommendation is to have an actual retreat and discuss the topic of the role of the EDC. There is so much activity going on in the community and the EDC needs to be a lot more pro-active than the Commission has in the past. Mr. Schenck stated an agenda would have to be prepared and public notice and would it would not be a retreat in the private sense. Commissioner Bercowetz asked the Commission if they would like to have a one topic meeting to discuss EDC's role. There was a consensus to have the next meeting with the one agenda item to discuss the role of EDC.

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

a. New and ongoing construction

Mr. Giner passed out the monthly report to the Commission. Mr. Giner stated as of May year to date revenue is \$2.5 million dollars and \$800,000 was budgeted. Mr. Giner stated the Finance Director stated this revenue is historical. Mr. Giner anticipated that the CREC school will generate approximately \$1.5 million dollars in permit fees in the next Fiscal Year.

Mr. Giner also reported that the Bloomfield Center apartments will be come in for demolition permits and subsequent building permits.

He also stated that Deringer-Ney came in to get their interior fit-out permits and that ABB has applied for fit-out electrical work.

Mr. Giner further stated Wendy's in coming in and will take down existing building and build another one. Cigna continues to do work on campus which is always a good sign. Mr. Giner also reported that Century Golf, which is affiliated with Arnold palmer, will soon re-open Gillette Ridge and that they had called to ask about grand opening signs. He also stated that a new self-storage facility going in at 99 Old Windsor Road and that O'Reilly's Auto Parts is hoping to put a new building on two properties at Blue Hills Avenue.

Mr. Giner reported that Filley Park Phase II bid documents almost ready to go and that , Eversource signed the final license agreement for the East Coast Greenway Section land is all set for the final approval process.

b. Wintonbury Mall

Mr. Rowson stated that he hopes to have the mall leasing manager, Stephanie Pious, at the next meeting to discuss the new leasing efforts. Mr. Rowson stated Mr. Goman is in Dallas and has not touched base.

c. Filley Park

Already reported on above.

d. Goman & York

Marketing

Mr. Rowson stated people are talking about Bloomfield which is a reflection of Mr. Giner's department. They continue to market the former Framer's Exchange property on Jerome Avenue. He believes that the parking issues on that site are not as detrimental as previously thought.

Bloomfield Center Business Alliance

Mr. Rowson stated the next meeting on June 20th at Isaacs Bagel Shop.

Etc.

Mr. Poland stated discussions continue around the Library site and shared parking. Looking at other communities and how they handled parking. In August they will start presenting some preliminary thoughts.

e. Other topics

Mr. Giner stated June 23rd 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. major fundraiser at Wintonbury Mall. The Town will have a tent for marketing Bloomfield. Tickets are available through Carbones. Mr. Giner stated if anyone wants to be at the table to let him know. The next EDC meeting will be August 23, 2016.

Commissioner Bononi stated the Commission should talk about deteriorating quality of housing stock, outdoor storage, abandoned vehicles and its effect on people relocating to Bloomfield. She believes that we should partner with local business to improve local housing stock. Mr. Schenck stated we have a blight regulations in effect handled by Mr. Kosilla, the Zoning Officer. Mr. Schenck stated that there has been some positive progress such the new owner of VFW building cleaning up the property and planning to demolish the house. Mr. Schenck stated it is a problem they are working on and looking to handle administratively. There was further discussion regarding blight and if any state programs to assist with grants to ease the burden on the homeowner.

6. Public Comment

Mr. Joseph Toner, 15 Francis Ave, Enfield, President of Hartford Iron Workers Union, stated that they have over 200 members that live in Bloomfield. He stated that he was protesting Niagara Water Companies hiring of non-union workers from out of state.

Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Drive, also questioned Niagara Bottling providing Jobs and Economic Development locally if they are bringing people from Louisiana. He questioned why Bloomfield's taxpayers are paying for police to be at Niagara Bottling. Mr. Gough felt that Niagara Bottling should be paying for them to be there.

Mr. Gough also asked Mr. Schenck if the Town Council June 25th retreat is private. Mr. Schenck stated the meeting is not private, the agenda is in planning stages and will be posted.

Mr. Gough further stated the Library should be in Town Center as well as the Community Center should be in Town Center. He felt that the new Urgent Care Center should not be in the Town Center.

Mr. David Mann, 1 Adams Road, asked that the agency should get its thoughts together regarding what should be in the Town Center.

Adjournment

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