



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021, 7:00 PM ZOOM MEETING

PRESENT: Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Donna Resutec, Regular Members Chris Todd, David Hurley and Jim Fay and Alternates Bryan Platt and Amos Smith

ABSENT: Alternate Susan Conte

STAFF

PRESENT: Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Barbra Galovich, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Sean Kelly called the Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (on non-agenda items): None

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Houlihan reported the Tolland County Chamber Tag Sale Trail will be held on April 24th and 25th, which is open to anyone that is within the district. She noted the Chamber already has 60 people signed up to participate in the event.

2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives - Nothing new to report, at this time.

3. Report: Connecticut Economic Development Association Best Practices

Chairman Kelly went out of agenda order and discussed item b first and then returned to item a.

b. Completed Economic Development Strategies – 2019 Plan of Conservation & Development Chapter 6, and update of Business Information Packet and EDC website.

Chairman Kelly referred to the memo received from Lisa Houlihan dated April 9, 2021. He noted the Capital Improvement Program request (FY21/22) is pending town approval to fund a project to create Village District Zoning discussed within the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for approximately 230 acres of undeveloped/under-developed land in the eastern portion of Town Center. The project will involve extensive community outreach, market analysis, and creation of mixed-use planning concepts to market to the development community.

Chairman Kelly cited new zoning regulations that have been adopted creating additional standards for Article 6 Land Use & Site Development Regulations of the Ellington Zoning

Regulations to add Section 6.5 Sidewalks & Fee-In-Lieu-of Sidewalks (effective November 1, 2020) and Section 6.6 Access Management (effective April 1, 2021). He noted the sidewalk project for Route 83 is ongoing and state funding has been approved. Ms. Houlihan added necessary easements have been obtained, design issues have been addressed and a commitment to fund letter should be obtained within the next month. The Town will then put the project out for bid and construction could start as soon as later this season or next year.

Chairman Kelly reviewed what is currently in the Business Information Packet that is mailed out to new business owners in town, such as the Ellington Tax Abatement Policy Informational Document, C-Pace (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program), Tolland County Chamber of Commerce Membership Information, Present year's Economic Development Commission schedule, and the Current Town Profile provided by AdvanceCT formerly known as Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC). He asked the commission if there was anything in the packet that they would like to see omitted or anything that they would like to see added or changed within the packet. Alternate Platt asked about potentially adding some of the demographics from the POCD. Ms. Houlihan said she would have those documents added to their packets next month for them to review and potentially add to the EDC webpage and packet. Alternate Smith asked what is driving the increase in students over the years, is it housing stock or apartments? Alternate Platt and Commissioner Resutek agreed they feel it could be both housing and apartments that have been constructed over the years.

Ms. Houlihan said will include electronic copies of the demographic reports from the POCD to the commission so they will be able to review and decide what information they would like to see on the webpage. Ms. Houlihan mentioned AdvancedCT now offers five free commercial/industrial properties listings municipalities to list on their Site Finder Site. She explained the possibility of adding a layer to the town's GIS system for listing properties that are currently available for sale or rent for commercial/industrial properties. She will report back to the commission about availability and cost next month. Commissioner Hurley said there are companies that find site locations for companies and they seem to be the prime folks that get companies to locate someplace. AdvancedCT provides the brokers with a data base to locate sites. He recommends providing the larger site first. Ms. Houlihan said she will explore the MapGeo option.

a. Discuss future Shop Ellington event

Ms. Houlihan said she sent out an email to a sample of local businesses asking if they would be interested in having a Business Showcase event. She stated she spoke with Rice Packaging and they are on board with the idea. The commission round tabled about a possible date and location for the event. They tentatively agreed to hold the event on Saturday, September 18th from 11 am to 2 pm or possibility doing it in October. Ms. Houlihan suggested conducting a survey to get feedback from the business owners in town. The commission discussed the pros and cons of holding the event at the farmer's market, utilizing the elementary parking lot, the senior center, or having it at the high school. No firm decisions were made on a date or location.

4. Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs

a. Update on Tax Abatement Program amendments.

Chairman Kelly was pleased to announce that the Board of Selectmen approved the changes to the Tax Abatement Policy adding abatement schedules, new definitions and recapture clause for businesses.

5. Report: Current Economic Activity

Ms. Galovich told the commission DiFiore's Pasta is seeking a Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Department next week and should be open for business soon thereafter. Ms. Houlihan said Cold Creek and Hidden Still are seeking approval to permanently expand their outdoor dining areas, and site plan modifications will be overseen by staff versus having to formally apply to the Planning and Zoning Commission as a measure to provide relief from restrictions placed on restaurants due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alternate Platt mentioned the State of Connecticut is proposing to relax outdoor dining requirements to April 1, 2022. Ms. Houlihan mentioned Oakridge Dairy is seeking approval from the Water Pollution Control Authority about extending the sewer service district and sewer main down Jobs Hill Road to their site. She shared her screen and showed the commission where the Town is proposing to expand the sewer access. She explained that American Rescue Plan funds may be used to support the infrastructure project.

Commissioner Hurley inquired about the wireless 5G correspondence that he forwarded to Ms. Houlihan via email prior to last month's meeting. He noted new laws only give towns 60 days to review 5G applications, if no action is taken by the Town, the application is automatically approved. Chairman Kelly said the commission discussed the topic last month and sent a referral to the Planning & Zoning Commission supporting regulations that enables 5G accessibility for Ellington business and residents while setting standards to protect viewshed, aesthetics and right-of-ways.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the March 10, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (SMITH) SECONDED (PLATT) AND PASSED (HURLEY ABSTAINED) TO APPROVE THE MARCH 10, 2021 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

2. Correspondence

Chairman Kelly reviewed the proposed solar project at 277 Sadds Mill Road. They are looking to develop 30 acres of the project site. A copy of the formal application was submitted to the Town Clerks Office. Chairman Kelly stated the developer has been working on the project for the past few years.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (SMITH) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbra Galovich, Recording Clerk