

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
January 20, 2022

Members present: Co-Chairperson, Susan Thorner, Howard Orr, John McGuire, Jack Henrie, Gayle Demko

Also Present: First Selectman, Colin Moll, Director of Planning & Development, Bill Hawkins, Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns

1. Co-Chair Susan Thorner called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM

2. Minutes

Ms. Demko moved to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2021 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGuire and unanimously approved.

3. Public Input - None

4. Discussion of First Selectman's Economic Development Agenda

First Selectman Moll distributed copies of a draft Suffield Business Portfolio Plan and reviewed it with the Commission members. He stated that he is looking for feedback on the proposal, which is in a rough draft form at this point. The Commission members will be emailed a copy of the plan so that they can come back with their ideas and comments. Mr. Moll noted that he would like the EDC to work with him on this as an exploratory committee.

5. Business Contact Committee Report

John McGuire noted that he would be meeting with at least two other members of the EDC to form Teams to interview Suffield businesses and would like to start with 20 interviews apiece for each team. Bob Kelly, Gayle Demko and Jack Henrie have offered to help with this outreach effort.

6. Department Budget Discussion

Mr. Hawkins reviewed the Commission's budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The proposed budget does include a part time position for an Economic Development Coordinator and he sent out a draft job description to the members.

7. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins noted that C & S Wholesale Grocers is planning to close their warehouse on Harvey Lane in February or March this year. However, he also pointed out that the industrial and warehouse space is in high demand currently. A public hearing will be held at the January 24th Planning &

Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting for a proposed text amendment addressing cannabis establishments. A copy of the draft is on the Town website. Mr. Hawkins also noted that United Gear's expansion plans were approved at the December PZC meeting, that there has been interest in the Town owned land located off South Street and that he has been in touch with the Connecticut Green Bank to discuss energy efficiency upgrade programs available to Suffield businesses.

8. Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins noted that work is continuing on the café at 66 North Main Street and they are hoping for a March opening. The Affordable Housing Plan Advisory Committee will be holding a Public Information Session on February 1st at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall hearing room with a remote option for participation. The specific information will be on the Town website. He also reported that Town Engineer, Karen Isherwood will be updating the cost estimate for Ffyer Place.

9. Discussion with Charles T. Alfano, Jr. – Mountain Road Marketplace

Mr. Alfano brought the Commission up to date on the Mountain Road Marketplace property including capital needs and building maintenance. Currently there are two vacancies and he is working to retain the existing tenants and attract new ones. He mentioned that new tenants have worked with the EDC and taken advantage of the funds available for their signs and he feels that has worked quite well. Ms. Thorner stated that the Commission is always interested in working with him to help in any way that they can.

10. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Mr. Orr moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary