

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
March 17, 2022

Members Present: Co-Chair, Brian Banak, Howard Orr, John McGuire, Jack Henrie, Bob Kelly, Gayle Demko

Also Present: Director of Planning & Development, Bill Hawkins, Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns

1. Co-Chair Brian Banak called the meeting to order at 8:34 AM
2. Minutes

Mr. Henrie moved to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2022 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Orr and unanimously approved.

3. Public Input – None
4. Business Contact Committee Report

John McGuire stated that members of the committee have done seven interviews with businesses this month. The people they have interviewed reported that they have received good support from the Town departments and staff. Currently four people, John McGuire, Gayle Demko, Bob Kelly from the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and Brian Michaud from the Zoning Board of Appeals are completing the interviews. They would like two more people to join the group and Mr. McGuire has contacted the Chairmen of the Conservation Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals asking for volunteers. He will follow up with these groups to try to get more interviewers. The committee plans to summarize the interviews in a spreadsheet with updated contact information. In addition, Mr. McGuire explained that the answers received from the interview would remain anonymous.

5. Discuss West Suffield Center Village District Zone (WSCVD) Change Request

Mr. Hawkins explained the history of the zoning districts on this property, which is located to the west of the West Suffield Cemetery on Mountain Road. The owner is seeking a zone change to have the entire property zoned residential (R-45) rather than part WSCVD and part residential. The application for this zone change request is on the agenda for the Planning and Zoning Commission's (PZC) meeting on March 21st for a public hearing. Members of the EDC spoke in favor of this zone change.

Mr. Banak moved that the Economic Development Commission support the proposed zone map amendment that is before the PZC. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 6-0-0.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that the new Zoning Regulations pertaining to cannabis establishments were sent to the State's Office of Policy & Management and Department of Health. As a result, he has received some inquiries from interested parties. He also reported that H.P. Hood is completing interior renovations to their building. The Town Attorney is working on a tax abatement ordinance for the town. Mr. Hawkins stated that once it is drafted he would bring it to the EDC to discuss. He also updated the Commission on recent leasing activity and vacancies on Kenny Roberts Memorial Drive.

7. Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins has Cardinal Engineering ready to complete design and engineering work for Ffyer Place. He stated he is waiting to hear from Laureno Enterprises with regard to the alignment of the road before having Cardinal Engineering begin work on the project. He noted that the Barista Café is hoping to open this month and updated the Commission on properties that are currently available for rent in the town center village district area. Mr. Hawkins reported that the Mountain Road multi-use trail construction will start in April. In other Town business, there will be a public hearing on the Affordable Housing Plan on May 4th as part of the Board of Selectmen meeting. The Facilities Master Plan and the Town Wide Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Study are expected to be completed in the coming months. The EDC budget will be presented at the April 4th Board of Finance meeting and members are welcome to attend with the Co-Chairs. Mr. Orr reported that Hilltop Farm plans to open the creamery this spring and interior renovations required to hold events inside the barn are nearing completion.

8. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission Mr. McGuire moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and passed unanimously 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary