

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting  
June 16, 2022

Members Present: Brian Banak, Susan Thorner, Bob Kelly, Howard Orr, John McGuire

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

1. Co-Chair, Brian Banak called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM
2. Minutes

The minutes of the May 19, 2022 regular meeting were unanimously approved.

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

John McGuire reported that most of the businesses that were contacted this month requested delaying the interviews until after July 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. McGuire also mentioned that he is still looking for more people to help with the interviews.

5. Discuss Draft Plan of Conservation and Development - Chapter 6 - Economic Development.

Mr. Hawkins reviewed the draft of the chapter on Economic Development that will be in the updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), looking for input from the EDC members. He described the narrative on commercial development and mentioned some of the more recent changes that have been made to the Zoning Regulations to encourage economic development. Members recommended some specific corrections and updates, and Mr. Hawkins noted that they could contact him with other suggestions that they have. He hopes to have a public information meeting in September for the POCD with a goal of having the plan adopted by the end of December. There was discussion about how other towns allow for reuse/repurposing of churches and other structures and if that is something to look at in the regulations.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) continued the public hearing for the text amendment application seeking to amend the Zoning Regulations regarding cannabis establishments to the June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Work on developing a tax abatement ordinance for the town is still ongoing. Mr. Hawkins noted that the state director of the Bradley Air Development Zone (BADZ) tax incentive program has retired and he has been in touch with the new director, Susan Chen. Rug Pad USA and Broad Brook Brewery have already participated in the tax abatement program that the state Department of Economic & Community Development offers.

## 7. Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins noted that the XGT Fitness ribbon cutting at their new location in the Mountain Road Market Place Plaza was well attended. He stated that the special permit application for a package store at 809 Thompsonville Road was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in May. The Mountain Road multi-use trail construction is nearing completion and there will be a ribbon cutting to which EDC members will be invited. Cardinal Engineering is finishing a design for upgrading Ffyer Place to a town road. A cost estimate will also be completed with the road design and there is consideration of applying for a Small Town Economic Assistant Program (STEAP) grant to fund the project. Mr. Hawkins also mentioned the Town is working on the CT Community Challenges Grant program, which provides a 50% match for qualifying projects up to \$10M. The town is considering two possible projects including converting the Babbs roller skating rink building to a multi-purpose recreation/commercial building or Bridge Street Park. The Town Wide Traffic Safety Study has been finalized and posted on the town website. The Town Engineer is looking at grant opportunities to fund some of the recommendations in the plan. The first Annual Summer Carnival will take place this weekend with fireworks on Friday night and the weekly summer/fall Farmers Market starts this Saturday. Mr. Hawkins noted that this summer there will be a farm passport program funded by the EDC with local farm stands and stores listed as well as the Farmers Market. There will be a weekly drawing to win a gift card as a prize for completing the passport. The part time position for an Economic Development Coordinator was posted as of June 6th and they hope to start interviews in July.

## 8. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission Mr. McGuire moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 AM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Thorner and passed unanimously 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary