

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting  
September 15, 2022

Members Present: Brian Banak, Susan Thorner, Howard Orr, Jack Henry, John McGuire, Gayle Demko, alternate, Bob Kelly, alternate

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

1. Co-Chair, Susan Thorner called the meeting to order at 8:34 AM

2. Minutes

The minutes of the June 16, 2022 regular meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Public Input – None

4. Business Contact Committee Report

John McGuire reported that businesses that were contacted at the beginning of the summer requested delaying the interviews until after Labor Day. Mr. McGuire also mentioned that he is still looking to expand the team of interviewers. He noted that when there is a new Economic Development Coordinator, that individual could be involved in the project as well.

5. Proposed Tax Abatement Ordinance Discussion

Mr. Hawkins reviewed the proposed Tax Abatement Ordinance for new businesses or expansion of existing businesses. There will be an application process and the Economic Development Commission will be working with the Director of Planning and Development or their designee to review applications. The proposed ordinance is a detailed document that describes the eligible participants and the procedures needed to have the abatement granted. It also details the amount of the abatement that can be given based upon the level of investment by a business. Mr. Hawkins noted that this abatement program is in line with comparable towns in the area. The goal is to use this program as an incentive for new businesses to locate to Suffield or to expand their business. The document has been approved by the Board of Selectman and will need to go to a Town Meeting for final approval. Selectman Moll noted that he hopes to have this on the agenda for a Town Meeting this fall.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported on inquiries regarding the available town-owned lots in the industrial area and potential purchases. He noted that the addition to Linde/Praxair is nearing completion. 1760

Mapleton Avenue was purchased for a private tax-exempt school and they have also purchased a number of homes in the vicinity within walking distance to the school.

## 7. Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins reported on recent interest in the former CVS store in the Mountain Road Marketplace and the restaurant space available at 82 North Main Street. The office building at 200 Mountain Road has been sold and the owner is working with staff on appropriate signage, which will need to be approved by the Design Review Board. There are plans being reviewed by the Historic District Commission for the church building at 140 South Main Street to convert it into apartments. The plan would also need special permit approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission. Cardinal Engineering has completed a design for upgrading Ff Tyler Place to a town road and is working with the Town Engineer to fine tune the cost estimate and plans for the road. Mr. Hawkins also reported that the package store at 809 Thompsonville Road is anticipated to open in the next few weeks.

Mr. Hawkins also mentioned the Town is considering submitting an application to the CT Community Challenges Grant program, which provides a 50% match for qualifying projects up to \$10M. After reviewing the high cost estimate of converting the Babbs roller skating rink building to a multi-purpose recreation/commercial building, it was determined that the Bridge Street Park project might be a more viable grant application. The Town is also looking at a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant to replace the Quarry Road Bridge.

The part time position for an Economic Development Coordinator is still open and there have been three interviews so far. Mr. Hawkins will be discussing whether any of the candidates will be invited back for a second interview with the Human Resources Director.

There is a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) survey on the Town website and Mr. Hawkins encouraged the Commission members to complete the survey, which is due by September 25<sup>th</sup>. An informational meeting will be held for the public this evening. The goal is for the POCD to be completed by the end of the year for submission to the State.

## 8. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Mr. Orr moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGuire and passed unanimously 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary