

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

Members Present: Howard Orr, Bob Kelly, Jack Henrie, John McGuire, Gayle Demko, Alternate.

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

1. Acting Chair, Howard Orr called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM
2. Minutes

The minutes of the October 20, 2022 regular meeting were approved with Bob Kelly abstaining as he was not present at this meeting.

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

John McGuire reported that three businesses were interviewed this month. He has some leads on expanding the number of interviewers on the committee so that they may be able to speak with more business per month. The overall feedback that they are receiving has been positive and businesses are very happy to be in Suffield.

5. Marketing Meeting Update

Gayle Demko reported on a long-term project that she has been working on to get information out across Town. She identified the Town Center Village District, the West Suffield Village District and Ebb's Corner as a location for message board signs. She explained that many residents out in the western area of Suffield do not come through the center of Town, do not see the signs on the town green, and are not aware of events that are happening. Ms. Demko has researched electronic message board signs in other towns and felt that they would help get messages out to the Suffield community. Mr. Hawkins explained that these types of signs are not currently permitted in the Zoning Regulations. He stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) has had discussions with the schools about the use of these signs and how the regulations would need to be amended in order to accommodate them. There was also a concern about the Historic District Commission allowing this type of sign in the town center area. There was discussion about how to proceed and it was suggested that the concept be presented to the Board of Selectmen as well as the PZC. Mr. Hawkins will make this part of his report to the PZC at the meeting on November 21st. The EDC members present at the meeting were supportive of the project.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported on the Tax Abatement Ordinance and the sale of the properties at 1140-1148 South Street that are both on the Town Meeting agenda set for November 22nd at 7PM. He also noted that there

is a company that is interested in the property on 1022 East Street South. Mr. Hawkins also described the proposed lease extension for telecommunications equipment on the Betty Lane Water Tower with Sprint Spectrum LLC. There was discussion about cell tower leases and the revenue that they generate.

7. Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that 123 Mountain Road is now fully leased with the addition of Fairway Mortgage. Commission members have been invited to the ribbon cutting to be held this afternoon. He noted that the liquor store at 128 Mountain Road is under new ownership and he spoke with the new owner about the matching sign grant program the EDC administers. Also at that plaza, the former CVS location is being divided into two suites, one of which is anticipated to be a physical therapy office. The owner of the West Suffield Shops (1365 Mountain Road) is working with the building department to renovate part of the building for a restaurant. They will need to work with the North Central District Health Department and the Design Review Board. He also reported on a new restaurant opening at 82 North Main Street, the estimate for the design for the road at Ff Tyler Place, the opening of a physician's office at 200 Mountain Road, and the opening of the new liquor store at 809 Thompsonville Road. Mr. Hawkins noted that there is a PZC public hearing for the adaptive reuse proposal for St. Joseph's Church at 140 South Main Street on Monday November 21st at 7 PM.

Other related projects Mr. Hawkins reported on were the Tax Increment Financing District Funds, the Community Challenges Grant Program application, the Facility Master Plan, the Plan of Conservation & Development, the purchase of the two CT DOT parcels off Overhill Drive that is also on the November 22nd Town Meeting agenda, and the progress on hiring an EDC Coordinator.

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Mr. Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 AM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Demko and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary