

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

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

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

1. Brian Banak called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM
2. Minutes

The minutes of the November 17, 2022 regular meeting were approved unanimously

3. Public Input – None
4. Approval of 2023 Meeting Calendar

Ms. Thorner moved to approve the 2023 meeting calendar, maintaining the schedule of the third Thursday of the month at 8:30 AM, with the exception of July and August when the Commission does not meet. The motion was seconded by Ms. Demko and passed unanimously.

5. Business Contact Committee Report

John McGuire reported that businesses were too busy to meet during the holidays. As a result, he has set up interviews for January with plans to provide the EDC with a recap and summary of the work completed to date shortly thereafter.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported on the Tax Abatement Ordinance, the sale of the properties at 1140-1148 South Street, and the lease agreement with T-Mobile for the Betty Lane water tower, which were all approved at the Town Meeting on November 22nd. He also noted that the transportation company interested in the property on 1022 East Street South has decided that it was not compatible with their needs. Mr. Hawkins has met with a business owner in Suffield who is interested in expanding and they are reviewing properties in the Light Industrial Zone that might be appropriate.

7. Commercial/Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that there were ribbon cuttings for Fairway Mortgage at 123 Mountain Road and Mai Liquors at 809 Thompsonville Road. The owner of the West Suffield Shops (1365

Mountain Road) is working on architectural plans to renovate part of the building for a restaurant. They will need to work with the Design Review Board for any changes to the outside of the building. A new restaurant, Fire on the Mountain, located at 82 North Main Street is continuing to work with the building department and the North Central District Health Department to open for business. Mr. Hawkins and Town Engineer, Karen Isherwood met with Cardinal Engineering to discuss the design plans for Ff Tyler Place. Cardinal Engineering will be making some changes to the design, which should finalize the plans. Work to divide the space at the former CVS location in the Mountain Road Marketplace into two suites continues. One of the spaces is anticipated to be a physical therapy office.

Mr. Hawkins reported that the topic of message board signage was discussed at the Planning & Zoning Commission's (PZC) November 21st meeting. There were mixed reactions with some members in favor and some not. EDC Member Gayle Demko will be discussing this with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) in January.

Other related projects Mr. Hawkins reported on were the progress on a proposal for a solar array at the landfill. He explained the steps in the process and the possible revenue to the Town from leasing the land. He discussed the Tax Increment Financing District funds, the Community Challenges Grant Program application, the Facility Master Plan, and the Community Development Block Grant application that was submitted for the housing authority. He also reported on the farmland and open space preservation applications and noted that the proposal to purchase two CT DOT parcels off Overhill Drive was approved at the Town Meeting of November 22nd. Mr. Hawkins also mentioned that the PZC will be holding a public hearing on possible adoption of the 2022 Plan of Conservation & Development on December 19th.

Progress on hiring an EDC Coordinator was discussed and the employment offer that was made to one candidate was not accepted. Mr. Hawkins met with Ms. Thorner to discuss changes to the job description with a goal to repost the position in January.

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Ms. Thorner moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary