

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
April 20, 2023

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

Also Present: Bill Hawkins - Director of Planning and Development, Chad Kuzontkoski – Economic Development Specialist, Ellie Binns - Recording Secretary

1. Susan Thorner called the meeting to order at 8:32 AM.
2. Minutes

The minutes of the March 16, 2023 regular meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Public Input – None
4. Introduce Economic Development Specialist – Chad Kuzontkoski

Mr. Hawkins introduced Chad Kuzontkoski, the new Suffield Economic Development Specialist. Mr. Kuzontkoski reported on the current projects he is working on which include updating the economic development page on the Town website and the existing business list. He has also updated the “How to Start a Business” document on the website. Mr. Kuzontkoski has been introducing himself to local business owners, attended the Bradley Development League meeting on April 13th, and is looking forward to working with the Commission.

5. Business Contact Committee Report

John McGuire reported on the North Central Chamber of Commerce Economic Development meeting in Enfield which he and Ms. Demko attended on March 16th. There was a panel discussion that each of the Towns participated in and he and Ms. Demko felt that it was well attended and that worthwhile discussions took place.

Interviews continue to be positive and Mr. Kuzontkoski will be meeting with Mr. McGuire to coordinate efforts for the Business Contact Committee.

Ms. Demko reported on her presentation to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on digital signs and noted that she received positive feedback. The BOS would like to understand what sort of policy other towns use to monitor content on these types of signs as they would like to see Suffield have a similar policy if digital message board signs are to be considered for Suffield.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that an application for 1300 East Street South has been submitted to the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) for a 21,600 SF building, which would have 12 separate storage units with a small office and bathroom. The tenants likely to rent these spaces would be small contractor type businesses. Approval has been given to connect to the Windsor Locks sewer system for the new building and the PZC has set a public hearing for May 15th. ATR Realty is

waiting to hear if their proposal to building a 55K SF advanced manufacturing facility will be selected for the 1148 South Street property. They continue to conduct their due diligence with respect to construction costs.

7. Commercial/Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that the properties at 140 & 156 South Main Street have been purchased but no new proposal on the use of the properties has been submitted at this time. The Design Review Board approved a request to replace the siding on the building located at 123 Mountain Road. The former CVS location at 136 Mountain Road is being renovated into two separate units, one of which will be occupied by a physical therapy office and Cardinal Engineering is working on easement plans for Ff Tyler Place. He stated that the owner of 1365 Mountain Road has abandoned plans to open a pizza restaurant in the building citing the cost of construction.

In other related topics, Mr. Hawkins noted that an application has been submitted for a Local Transportation Capital Improvements Program (LOTICIP) grant for \$1.2M in funding to repave the Windsor Locks Canal Trail. He noted that in the 2022 LOTICIP solicitation, grants were awarded for the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail repaving and replacement of cross-culverts with a pedestrian bridge, and to repave the Town portion of Bridge Street while adding bicycle and pedestrian amenities.

Mr. Hawkins also reported on Farmland & Open Space Preservation noting that 98 acres at 380 North Main Street is being preserved with a DEEP OSWA grant and a closing on the project is expected in the coming weeks. The Chmiel Farm at 1449 Hill Street will be on the next Town Meeting agenda to approve funding to purchase the development rights of the property. The Overhill Drive open space parcels are proceeding through the CT DOT process and is expected to close this year. Three other farms representing approximately 140 acres are in various stages of the preservation process. Mr. Hawkins noted that the Breezy Way Farm six lot subdivision is approved and building permits are underway. Lastly, he noted Chad Kuzontkoski, the Economic Development Specialist's hours will be Monday 8-4:30, Wednesday 1-4, and Thursday 8-4:30 and that he can be reached at 860-668-3849 or CKuzontkoski@SuffieldCT.gov.

8. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Ms. Demko moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGuire and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary