

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
September 21, 2023

Members Present: Gayle Demko – Chair, John McGuire – Secretary, Jack Henrie, Maria Silvestri, Jeff Girard

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

1. Gayle Demko called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM., and welcomed new members Jeff Girard and Maria Silvestri.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the June 15, 2023 regular meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Public Input – None

4. Discuss proposed TIF Matching Grant Program

Colin Moll presented the plan to offer funding to businesses in the Town Center with money that has been accrued through the Town Center Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) that was instituted in 2017. This will be a grant program where the Town will fund up to 80% of improvement projects with a maximum grant amount of \$25,000. The Economic Development Commission (EDC) will be involved in the application approval process and the EDC Specialist, Chad Kuzontkoski will be working with applicants to help with the process. This program is limited to the Town Center Village District Zone because that is where the TIF funds are collected. Based on the success of the program, the EDC might recommend that a TIF district get approved in other areas of Town. The program will be widely promoted to get the information out to the business and property owners in the TIF district.

5. Discuss Commission Project Possibilities

Gayle Demko had compiled a list of possible projects that the EDC might consider to help promote business in Suffield. Some of the ideas were a Community Ambassador Project including a brochure for businesses to distribute that would highlight things to do in Town. Other ideas included installing a kiosk for information on the Town green and other locations, community events working in conjunction with the Suffield Academy and or the Hathaway House, a promotional video project, and small business events. Discussion took place about prioritizing the ideas to manage the workload for the Commission and staff. Ms. Demko stated that she is looking for other ideas from the members and will send out a list to the Commission for input and comments.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Kuzontkoski reported on the information in the light industrial area of Town including properties for sale and new building projects at 1300 East Street South and 1186 South Street.

7. Commercial /Town Center Update

Mr. Kuzontkoski reported that three new businesses have opened in Suffield – Resilience Physical Therapy and Wellness, Intention Yoga and Wellness, and Hair Revival. He also noted that Pride’s Corner Nursery is having a solar array installed and Karenough crafts is expanding their space. He reported on the office space that is available for lease as well.

8. Staff Report

Mr. Kuzontkoski brought the Commission up to date on other projects he has been working on which include an update of the Town website with a new page called “Local Business Hub”. He noted that the Farm Guide and Passports were completed and he is working on the creation of a video to promote living and doing business in Suffield. Mr. Kuzontkoski and Mr. McGuire did three additional interviews with local businesses. Plans are well underway for an event aimed at business owners in conjunction with the Connecticut Small Business Development Center and for a Small Business Saturday event on November 25th of this year.

9. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary