

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

Members Present: Gayle Demko – Chair, John McGuire – Secretary, Jeff Girard, Bob Kelly

Also Present: Chad Kuzontkoski – Economic Development Specialist, Collin Moll, First Selectman, Ellie Binns - Recording Secretary

1. Gayle Demko called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.
2. Minutes

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

3. Public Input – None
4. Commission Project Update: Walking Tour & Art Walk

Ms. Demko reported on her contact with the Seward Johnson Altelier Company to have a three month display of five life like sculptures in different locations in Town. Simsbury had a larger display last year of sculptures. Ms. Demko showed members the book with the different sculptures that are available. She raised the possibility that the cost could be covered by local contributors and businesses. Ms. Demko also reported on her investigation into the possibility of a walking tour of historic Main Street as well as one of the Cemetery in the center of Town. The historical information is already available from a previous study and the information for the cemetery was compiled from the cemetery tour held in the fall. She will do further research into the best way to do the audio tours. Mr. Kuzontkoski noted that the cost might be covered by available humanities grants that he is looking into.

5. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Kuzontkoski reported that there is 17,245 square feet of leased space available at 15 Kenny Roberts Memorial Drive and that 68 acres on Firestone Drive was recently sold.

6. Town Center Update: Beautification Projects

Ms. Demko spoke about projects for beautification further west down Mountain Road. She and Mr. Kuzontkoski will do further research on possibilities and the costs.

Mr. Kelly reported on his conversation with Mike Gorman of Gorman +York Property Advisors who recently did a study for the Town of East Granby. He would be willing to come to an Economic Development Commission (EDC) meeting to give an overview of the types of services that they provide to towns to help plan for economic growth. Members agreed that they are interested in that type of meeting to see if that is a direction they would want to pursue.

Kuzontkoski reported on the opening of two new businesses on Mountain Road and the ribbon cuttings for The Hair Revival at 133 Mountain Road and Ivy Rehab Physical Therapy at 266 Mountain Road.

## 7. Projects Report

Mr. Kuzontkoski updated the Commission on the purchase of 1380 Mountain Road by a private investor and that he is discussing ideas for a business that would be suitable for the building. He also reported on the purchase of 0 Mountain Rd. – 3.25 acres of vacant land behind 1379 Mountain Road and the opening of Ivy Rehab Physical Therapy at 266 Mountain Road.

He noted that the passport program for Small Business Saturday was a success and will be expanded in the future. A drawing was done from the completed passports for gift cards to the participating local retailers and the winners were notified. Video of the drawing is available on the EDC's Facebook page.

Mr. Kuzontkoski reported that the revised Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) District master plan amendment was passed at the Town Meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>. He distributed to the Commission a draft of a brochure to distribute on the program to eligible businesses as well as work on the webpage that will outline the program. The program will run from January 8<sup>th</sup> until March 15<sup>th</sup> for the submission of applications. It is anticipated that the EDC will review applications at their March meeting. There was discussion about the selection process and rating applications. Further information will be given to the Commission members as applications start to come in.

He also gave an update on collaborative work with the Youth Center and local businesses with a "Try Something New Free" which had over 30 sign ups. Progress has been made on a Town Video and it is expected there will be a first draft in the coming weeks.

A collaboration between the Economic Development Department, Suffield High School, local manufacturers and trades people took place on December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Suffield High School. The "SHS Post-Secondary transition, training and trade expo", a job fair aimed at soon-to-be-graduating high school students was held. It was well attended and discussions are ongoing regarding future events and things learned from this initial event.

Mr. Kuzontkoski noted that the Suffield Parks and Recreation Department is putting on a small business workshop series for independent/small businesses focusing on promotion and marketing, brand building, social media presence, and creating marketing materials. The Economic Development Department is helping to promote the three workshops scheduled for 1/25, 2/15, and 3/14.

He also noted that the proposed “Development Plan” for the commercial districts has been discussed with the EDC and the First Selectman and the concept has been narrowed to devise development plans for specific areas of town. The next step will be coming up with these plans and prioritizing them.

Mr. McGuire asked for an updated report on the Grand List for next meeting.

8. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary