

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
January 18, 2024

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

Also Present: Chad Kuzontkoski – Economic Development Specialist, Ellie Binns - Recording Secretary

1. Gayle Demko called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. and in the absence of Brian Banak, appointed Jeff Girard as a voting member for this meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the December 21, 2023 regular meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Public Input – None

4. Gorman and York Presentation

Mike Gorman was unable to make the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Mr. Kelly will contact him and try to arrange for him to be at the February 15th meeting.

5. Commission Project Update: Walking Tour & Art Walk

Ms. Demko reported that she has been in touch with the high school art department and they are enthusiastic about working on the Art Walk in the spring. In conjunction, following up on the Seward Johnson Altelier Company sculptures, noting the cost would be \$30,000.00 for a three month display of life like sculptures in different locations in Town. She is pursuing grants to cover some of the costs and would like to bring in others in the community to be involved in the project. Local businesses and organizations might be interested in sponsoring individual sculptures. Ms. Demko also gave an update on having of a walking tour of historic Main Street as well as one of the Cemetery in the center of Town. Jackie Hemond of the Historic Society is working on this with Ms. Demko. There is already a tour that was done of the Old Bridge Community on the east side of Town and this could be used as a model. She also reported on her research into having kiosks in the center of Town. The trend is to use electronic kiosks and Ms. Demko showed a link that gave examples. There was discussion about how those would fit in, especially in the historic district of Town. Mr. Girard would like to do some research on the use of the kiosks to get an idea of how much use they would get and if it is worth pursuing.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Kuzontkoski reported that Praxair has submitted an application to the CT Siting Council for a battery storage facility on their property on Ucar Street.

7. Town Center Update

Mr. Kuzontkoski also updated the Commission on the ribbon cutting scheduled for February 22nd at Ivy Rehab and noted that a new sign was approved by the Design Review Board and has been installed.

8. Projects Report

Mr. Kuzontkoski reported that the revised Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) matching grant program was launched on January 8th and applications will be accepted through March 15th. He will continue to promote it with local businesses and property owners in the district. The collaboration between the EDC, Youth Center and local businesses will be working with the Suffield Gymnastics Academy for an event in the near future.

He also announced that an event at the State Capitol will be held with the Bradley Development League (BDL) on April 24th from 10 AM to 3 PM with each town that is a member of the BDL participating to showcase businesses around the airport and their respective towns.

Mr. Kuzontkoski led a discussion about the idea of having a business/property alliance group in the downtown district. Commission members felt that it would be worthwhile if it were for educational purposes with the Town offering information to benefit the group rather than a social group.

Suffield is a member of Connecticut Main Street Center and as such is entitled to an annual town assessment. Members expressed interested in taking advantage of this and were wondering if there are examples of reports from other towns. Mr. Kuzontkoski will get more information.

9. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary