

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
March 13, 2012

Present: Steven Santino
Brian Donahue
Ed Shapiro
Brian Kennedy
John Jensen

Also Present: Gary Goeschel, Planning Director
Paul Formica, First Selectman

A. Preliminary Business

1. Call to Order. Chairman Santino called the Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting of March 13, 2012 to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes. Mr. Santino asked for corrections, additions or deletions to the January 10, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Economic Development Commission.

MOTION: John Jensen moved to approve the January 10, 2012 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Economic Development Commission, as presented.
Seconded by Brian Donahue. Mr. Jensen abstained from voting. Motion carried. (3-0-1)

3. Delegations. There were no delegations.

4. Public Comments. There were no public comments.

B. Reports

Commission member Mr. Shapiro joined the meeting.

1. Ex-officio Report. Mr. Formica informed the Commission each of their appointments is up. The Town Charter requires that we have an Economic Development Commission.

2. Chairman's Report. Mr. Santino informed the Commission he rescheduled Tony Sheridan for the April meeting.

Mr. Santino informed the Commission of an Economic Development Seminar on April 3 and April 10 at the Groton Motor Inn & Suites.

3. Presentation of Bills. The Recording Secretary presented a bill for 2.50 hours of secretarial work for the Economic Development Commission from January 10, 2012 to March 9, 2012.

MOTION: Mr. Jensen moved to pay the bill from the Recording Secretary for 2.5 hours of secretarial services from January 10, 2012 to March 9, 2012. Seconded by Mr. Donahue. (5-0) Unanimous.

C. Old Business

1. Agri-Business Committee. Commission members reviewed the February 15, 2012 Agri-Business Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Santino received an email from Tom Kalal asking if the Economic Development Commission would fund \$15 each for four people to attend a seminar on “Growing Farms in Your Community”.

MOTION: Mr. Shapiro moved to approve the expenditure of \$60 for four members of the Agri-Business Subcommittee to attend a seminar on “Growing Farms in Your Community”. Seconded by Mr. Donahue. (5-0) Unanimous

D. New Business

1. Mr. Gary Goeschel, Town Planner, gave a presentation on Economic Gardening. It focuses on entrepreneur growth. Economic gardening focuses on creating jobs locally. It works to identify the location of existing customers, by site selection and marketing analysis and it compares locations.

Mr. Goeschel stated it will tell what consumer’s habits are. Mr. Goeschel will provide information on infrastructure and connections.

Mr. Goeschel informed the Commission he has begun to reach out to a number of different business organizations in town. He has also met with some local businesses.

Mr. Jensen stated in the field of commercial real estate the stumbling block he sees is the permitting process. Some of it costs too much for a small business. Mr. Goeschel stated he will put together a team with the Town Engineer, Zoning Official and Health Department and direct a potential business in the right direction.

Mr. Jensen discussed the special permitting process. He gave an example of a hairdresser moving its business out of town and a barber who would like to move in to its location. It is necessary to get a special permit. The process revolves around meetings.

Mr. Shapiro felt it is better for a prospective business to know everything upfront.

The Economic Development Commission should set up the environment for a business to take place with less government control. Mr. Goeschel felt they can obtain reports at the Town Hall. Government can connect with individuals who understand marketing.

Mr. Goeschel asked how can we work together to make the permitting process easier? He stated he is willing to meet with the Commission and look at how we can make the permitting process easier.

Mr. Jensen suggested that the First Selectman meet with North Stonington's First Selectman to see how its Economic Development Commission handles new businesses coming to its town.

Mr. Jensen feels the Economic Development Commission should be involved with Zoning, the First Selectman and the Fire Marshal. He felt the permitting process should be streamlined; the Zoning hurdles should be eliminated. This Commission should meet on a quarterly basis with each of these departments and express its concern for the business community. Mr. Kennedy stated while working with individuals in Windham he was disappointed with the permitting process the individuals had to go through while trying to open up a dance studio.

Mr. Jensen stated this Commission has helped Main Street, worked on the Charrette Study and now has a subcommittee of Agri-Business.

E. Open Discussion. There was no further discussion.

MOTION: Mr. Shapiro moved to adjourn the March 13, 2012
Regular Meeting at 8:10 p.m. Seconded by
Mr. Donahue. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Ghersi, Recording Secretary