

TOWN OF DURHAM

Economic Development Commission P.O. Box 428 Durham, CT 06422

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the EDC was held on Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at 7:00 PM, at the library lower level, both the Chair, Rick Hanley, and the Secretary, Carl Montagano, being present. The chair welcomed the group at approximately 7:09pm.

2. Roll Call

The following board members were present: Peter Cascini, Jerry Lipchus, Ona McLaughlin and Diana McCain. Gary Sheldon was absent.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for EDC meetings on 12/11 approved unanimously.

4. Correspondence

- Rick received a phone call from 'Maryanne' from the CT Small Business Center. She is interested in speaking to the commission re: upcoming projects, or services they might provide. Peter Cascini will reach out to Maryanne to determine if her services are appropriate to the EDC, and whether she would be willing to present to EDC at a future meeting.
- Rick called Gene Chapetta regarding collaborating with the EDC re: the Durham Fair. Rick will coordinate his attendance to a future meeting, possibly 2/26.
 - Ona suggested a free tent at the fair for Durham farmers to sell their products. A farmer's market at the Durham Fair, showcasing local businesses. "Discovery Tent"...
- Bruna Verna called Rick. Bruna had a public hearing at P&Z regarding Dog Day Care, and would like to speak with the EDC. Rick will call Bruna to attend a future EDC meeting.
- Peter Cascini has received several calls from residents stating that some board members have been speaking on behalf of the EDC, in areas where EDC has not actually taken a position.
- Diana has received calls regarding why the EDC hasn't taken a position.
- Ona and Rick discussed the minutes of the 12-17-07 Historic District Meeting. Rick advised the minutes incorrectly state the nature of the conversation.

5. Old Business

Discussion on Silver Eagle Development: (continued discussion from 11/27/07)

- The group discussed whether or not to taken a position as a commission.
- Joe Pasquale addressed the commission. Joe advised we owe it to ourselves and to the town to establish criteria for out evaluating a business, before we entertain any vote. "You have to

have faith in the information you are presented, but Don Klepper-Smith omitted the information about tax abatements, which would reduce tax revenue. John Corona also denied that Price Chopper was the grocer, even though the next week it was announced". Joe appreciates the hard work the group put into the strategy package. Joe fears we jeopardize our credibility without set criteria.

- Middlesex Chamber approved the Silver Eagle Development Project, based on their criteria. Jerry advised that taxes and jobs should be the criteria.
- Molly Knoll addressed the commission. "Have we been asked to take a position? Yes, per Rick, by Attorney John Corona. Have you as a commission heard from any other constituents? Yes, per Rick... Joe Pasquale has been engaged throughout.
- Peter has spoken to Lino, who wishes the project doesn't happen, but is committed to an expansion project. Lino is nervous and concerned about the project.

- Carl moved and Ona seconded a motion to table all EDC votes as a commission to support or not support specific businesses until a set of criteria is established, voted on, and approved. The motion was approved unanimously.

CERC Draft Economic Development Strategy

- Ona raised the issue of page 24, item #6 regarding rezoning Main Street north of 147. The properties are too small to support a business. They have no back yard. Rick provided background that this 'should be considered' because they might possess an opportunity for economic growth, since the town has such limited commercial space. Ona suggested we look at the properties when we drive by.
- Ona and Diana will submit all remaining comments to Carl for inclusion in these minutes.

Ona's comments:

Page 24: IV Recommendations

Potential Strategies - North Commercial Area

6. The further commercial development of properties along the west side of Main St. and north of the intersection of Rte 147 should be encouraged. The installation of sidewalks on the east side of Main St. and north of Rte. 147 would link the residential zone to the envisioned community center to the south and could encourage the use of the homes for certain home occupations that do not require extensive parking.

Diana's comments:

Page 13: Opportunities

Proposed: Delete paragraph about Historic District and replace with:

The Historic District and other historic resources of Durham represent an economic development opportunity. Preservation of these historic resource creates a cohesive town center, and a sense of community and identity that can be attractive to a business considering locating in town. The town's historic resources also can be utilized to promote heritage tourism, an industry that has so far received little emphasis in the town's economic activity.

Page 30: Durham Historic District: Introduction

Proposed: Delete second and third sentences. Any changes to zoning fall under the purview of Planning & Zoning, and re-assessment of zoning regulations has already been addressed in

Section IV, Recommendations, Item 7 (on page 8). Essex, Stonington, Guilford, and Litchfield are not necessarily examples that Durham should make it a policy to emulate. Their Historic District centers are much more commercial than residential in nature.

Page 30: Durham Historic District: Section 2

Proposed: Delete

Main Street south of Route 68 is zoned Main Street Residential on the west side past the town green and on the east side to Higganum Road. Much of the “critical mass” of non-residential development in this area consists of schools, churches, and public buildings. If individual property owners want to operate offices, studios, bed and breakfasts, or small-scale retail uses in their homes, they can request the necessary permits, variances, etc. from Planning and Zoning. The Strategic Plan should not target this portion of the Historic District for non-residential development.

- Rick will contact Beth Moncata and ask her to personally reach out to stakeholders and advise them that the strategy will be voted on and all final feedback considered for the February meeting. The strategy will be the only agenda item under new/old business.
- Discussion on inclusion of job creation as a goal of the strategy was tabled for Feb. 26.
- Next Steps
 - Rick advised Brian can attend the February meeting, and the commission will be able to sign off on the strategy with stakeholder attendance and approval.
- Rick advised that Brian Miller is now part of Turner Miller Group

2007/2008 EDC Budget discussion (continued from 11/27/07)

- 2008 Budget Update
 - Rick presented the following budget for presentation to the Board of Selectmen:
 - Printing: \$1,500
 - 50 hours of CERC Consulting: \$6,250
 - CERC Sitefinder dues: \$650
 - Postage for mailings: \$250
 - Miscellaneous: \$1,000
 - Total Budget for 2008-2009: \$9,650
- Diana McCain moved that the proposed budget be approved by the EDC. The motion passed unanimously.

Web Site Update: Jerry Lipchus:

- Per Jerry, no updates at this time

6. New Business

- No new business discussed.

7. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 9:28pm.

Next Meeting: 7:00 PM, on February 26th at the Durham Library, Lower level.

Prepared by:

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