



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

November 18, 2020 – 4 PM – Virtual Meeting

PRESENT: *Randall Graff, Nathan Karnes, Tim Rice, Sharran Selig-Bennett, Trevor Thorington Jane Garibay, Adam Gutcheon, Peter Souza, James Burke*

ABSENT: *James Martin*

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Priority Redevelopment Property List** – Burke began the discussion by referring to a Priority Redevelopment Property List update that had been emailed prior to the meeting. He noted there have been no changes for any of the properties other than recent action by the Town Council regarding the Redevelopment Parcel.

★ **Great Pond** – In January 2020 when the Economic Development Commission first addressed the Priority Redevelopment Property List, they recommended removing Great Pond development, which the Town Council did at their January meeting.

★ **Redevelopment Parcel** – At their November 2020 meeting, the Town Council asked for a concept plan for the Redevelopment Parcel as an enhanced, park-like open space. At this EDC meeting, instead of recommending the removal of the parcel from the redevelopment list, the commission recommended no change.

★ **Former Roger Wolcott School** – At the November 2020 Town Council meeting, the council asked staff to research:

1. Demolishing the former Roger Wolcott School and redeveloping the site for low-density residential housing.
2. Finding an educational entity to use the building.
3. Renovating the building for a town-related educational use or combination of uses.

Motion: Nathan Karnes made a motion to add the former Roger Wolcott School to the Priority Redevelopment Property List. Sharran Selig-Bennett seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

- ★ **Larsen's Hardware** – The question was raised if this property differs from other underused retail space and should remain on the list. It was noted the former hardware store is on the list because it is blighted and in a prominent location. Discussion then centered around re-writing the narrative to remove reference to a previous plan.
- b. **2021 Annual Meeting Schedule** – EDC meetings are scheduled to continue virtually on the third Wednesday of every other month.

Motion: Tim Rice made a motion to adopt the 2021 EDC Annual Meeting Schedule. Sharran Selig-Bennett seconded the motion; the schedule was unanimously accepted.

4. ITEMS FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

The Windsor Chamber of Commerce is providing technical assistance for the CT Cares Small Business Grant program, for which applications may still be submitted.

One of the grant program qualifications is businesses must demonstrate a 20%-or-more loss in revenue year-to-date as of September 30, 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. This includes the summer when people were more confident and restaurants had open-air dining and were delivering more. Therefore, many businesses do not qualify for the grant. It is hoped the federal government will provide more funds or the state may need to.

The chamber is also working with First Town Downtown to increase participation in Small Business Saturday. And for the first time, they are promoting Artists Sunday to encourage consumers to support the numerous local artists.

Additionally, the chamber is working to have a virtual job fair with Windsor High School this year to help connect students with employers despite the pandemic.

First Town Downtown is planning to hold the Torchlight Parade again this year since the parade is outside and families can socially distance and wear masks. Fire departments from the region and local landscaping companies are already scheduled to participate. First Town feels the parade will give people something to look forward to and brighten up the holidays.

First Town Downtown continues to deliberate on the road diet and how it will affect Broad Street. Two public hearings have been held to show what the road diet will look like and to invite the public to discuss what they want the design to include.

Ironically, the recent Taste of Windsor held virtually made more money than previous years. First Town Downtown looks forward to future events to keep their budget stable.

The Bradley Development League is updating their website and plans to unveil the revised website at the beginning of the year.

5. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

No items were presented from the commission.

6. ITEMS FROM STAFF

The attached Windsor Development Activities Report dated November 18, 2020 was discussed to inform the EDC of projects the Town Planning & Zoning Commission has approved. It was noted the zoning approval for the “sub-village” for senior independent living at Great Pond Village allows for medical care.

The Sardilli Produce & Dairy Company, which planned to relocate to 550 Marshall Phelps Road, has been impacted by the pandemic and is looking for someone to lease the facility until they can continue with their project.

Because people are working at home, office occupancy has been greatly reduced. Since there are fewer retail establishments in Windsor than in surrounding communities, our town does not appear to have a lot of vacancy. There is concern, however, about the hotel industry.

Staff is reviewing the small business loan program to update, revise, and publicize it. The Economic Development team is examining how it communicates with the various town sectors.

The Town Council recently reviewed a topic the EDC discussed last year: amending the tax abatement policy to include residential housing as an eligible use. Also, the council held a workshop to discuss housing needs in the community. Although the council decided not to amend the policy, they plan to address workforce and senior housing needs during 2021. A state statute requires all Connecticut towns to create an affordable housing plan by spring 2022.

7. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Sharran Selig-Bennett moved to accept the May 13, 2020 meeting minutes; Tim Rice seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved as distributed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Tim Rice moved to adjourn the meeting. Sharran Selig-Bennett seconded the motion. The members unanimously approved adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.