



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

November 15, 2023 – 5 PM – Ludlow Room, Windsor Town Hall and via Zoom

PRESENT IN PERSON: *Randy Graff, Al Loomer, Tim Rice, and Nathan Karnes*

PRESENT ONLINE: *Jermika Cost*

ABSENT: *Trevor Thorington, Sharran Selig-Bennett*

STAFF PRESENT: *Peter Souza, Patrick McMahon*

GUESTS: *Eric Eisnor, Windsor Public Schools, Ken Fredette, Executive Director of First Town Downtown, Andrew Surprise, Executive Director of the Windsor Chamber of Commerce, Jaquan Samuels, Community Relations Specialist for Eversource*

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Graff called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Career and Technical Education

McMahon said that manufacturers are looking for workforce and that the schools can be a pipeline to train future talent for careers in manufacturing. He introduced Eric Eisnor, Faculty Member at Windsor High School's Career and Technical Education program. Eisnor says they are focused on training for manufacturing, robotics, automotive and other sectors. They are hoping to line up work studies or internships with local firms that could lead to jobs after graduation. However, some of the manufacturers have an age requirement of 18 so many students are too young to participate. So an alternative is a mentorship program, where representatives of companies are invited to the school to discuss their operations. Eisnor said the shops are very well equipped. Surprise said the Chamber is working on a program that TLD, Collins and Advanced Auto Parts are interested in participating and would like to facilitate with Eisnor and the Chamber's workforce committee. Companies are concerned with liability for students under 18. Representatives of Howden (Spencer Turbine) visited Eisnor's class. Eisnor said there is also a culinary program, automotive shop, graphics and video lab. McMahon said that Eisnor came to the Town Council in October as part of Manufacturing Month. Eisnor said student from Windsor High participated in the Aerospace Components Manufacturers Aerospace Alley Conference and Fair at the Convention Center. Eisnor has reached out to Asnuntuck and Goodwin to explore ways they can assist the CTE

program. Eisnor has established a Habitat for Humanity chapter so students can volunteer and get some experience in construction.

b. Annual Meeting Schedule for 2024

Karnes moved adoption of the schedule of regular meetings for 2024. Rice seconded. It was discussed that if there are no action items then meetings can be canceled. The motion passed unanimously.

4. ITEMS FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Chamber of Commerce – Surprise mentioned the workforce initiative, as well as a Small Business Marketing Initiative where the Chamber would contract with a marketing firm and offer packaged rates for digital advertising. The Tobacco Valley Chamber of Commerce which the Windsor Chamber is a part of has a Business to Business Expo planned for the Double Tree Hotel in Windsor Locks.

First Town Downtown – Fredette said that Nightmare on Broad Street went well. They will be promoting Small Business Saturday. On December 2nd there will be the Torchlight Parade. For the same day, Euphoria Tent Solutions is organizing a pop-up market at 25 Central Street and the Bean will also participate, as well as Bus 13 performing at the Windsor Arts Center. FTDT will be participating with Annisa Teich from Windsor Worx on a Connecticut Main Street Center Accelerator project to better activate the upstairs at the VFW.

Bradley Development League – McMahon stated that the BDL highlighted Manufacturing Month in October. Student tours of MetFin in Suffield and Collins (Hamilton Sunstrand) in WL took place.

5. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

Karnes asked about Leipold and McMahon mentioned they were recently acquired by NE-XT Technologies.

Loomer asked about Founders Square. McMahon said the demolition permit was issued but we are still awaiting the building permit application. Greg Vaca is looking for a groundbreaking ceremony sometime in December with invites to the Governor and Commissioner of DECD.

Cost asked about the location of the coworking space which was supposed to go into 208 Broad Street. McMahon stated that Windsor Worx ended up leasing space at 41 Mechanics Street.

6. ITEMS FROM STAFF

McMahon provided an update on Windsor Worx and The Collective Space. Windsor Worx and seeking applications for the first cohort of five for the Neighborhood Business Incubator.

Target Distribution Center is going along very well.

Construction is going well on the 170,000 SF flex industrial building at 425 Day Hill Road which replaced two office buildings. They have had leasing interest but have not signed any tenants yet.

Day Hill Dome is looking to be open on December 1st and they already have bookings for soccer, lacrosse, softball, and flag football.

McMahon stated that there is interest in establishing an indoor velodrome (cycle racing) facility in the vicinity of the Day Hill Dome that would double as an event space. The proponents had an investor meeting at Dudleytown Brewing that attracted approximately 40 people. No plans have been submitted to the town for review.

Graff asked the status of Dr. Mohan Sachdev's various properties. McMahon said that Dr. Sachdev hoped to have Tulsi (Indian Restaurant) open by Christmas. Bowfield Greens across from Jim's Pizza has zoning approval for 77 apartment units over first floor commercial and he has contracted with a builder. Town staff is awaiting on a building permit application.

Rice asked about the status of the ball fields next to Fitch Court and the possibility of new housing at that location. McMahon stated that some preliminary planning is being conducted to see how many housing units could potentially be constructed there for senior and disabled housing but not decisions have been made on the future of this location. Town staff is looking at various properties across the community that could be appropriate for affordable housing.

Karnes asked if the Council ever took up the question of multifamily housing in our tax abatement policy. Souza mentioned that the Council first focused on the TIF Policy. He also mentioned that the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted a text amendment for properties at Exit 37 Bloomfield Avenue that would provide a density bonus if affordable housing units were included in the project.

7. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Loomer moved approval of the minutes for September 20, 2023. Karnes seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2024.