



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

March 20, 2024 – 5 PM – Ludlow Room, Windsor Town Hall and via Zoom

PRESENT IN PERSON: *Randy Graff, Al Loomer, Tim Rice, Sharran Selig-Bennett, Nathan Karnes, and Bill Davis (TIF Advisory Committee)*

PRESENT ONLINE: *Jermika Cost*

ABSENT: *Trevor Thorington, Al Loomer*

STAFF PRESENT: *Peter Souza, Patrick McMahon*

GUESTS: *Ken Fredette, Executive Director of First Town Downtown, Andrew Surprise, Executive Director of the Windsor Chamber of Commerce*

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Graff called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Windsor Center TIF District

McMahon reviewed technical amendments required to the TIF District Master Plan to correct the OAV for 276 Broad Street (VFW), four units at 33 Mechanics Street (First Town Square) to adjust for veterans exemptions, and adjustments to properties at 54, 62 and 64 Poquonock Ave. These adjustments result in a total reduction of taxable real property (OAV changes) of \$335,690 and decreases the percentage of taxable assessed value in the District from 1.65% to 1.64%. Exhibit D would be updated to reflect these changes to total incremental tax revenue and the percentage captured (75%) and amount to the General Fund (25%). These amendments were introduced to the Town Council at their last meeting and scheduled a public hearing for 7 p.m. on April 1st.

McMahon stated that the values in the District increase approximately \$14M from 2021 and 2023 primarily due to increases in values of condos at First Town Square and the value of Windsor Station Apartments. This results in \$396,710 in increased assessed value. The 75% captured assessed value would result in \$297,530. Residential values in Windsor have increase significantly since the last revaluation causing a shift from commercial to residential in the grand list. As such, it is being recommended that \$277,500 go to Property Revaluation Mitigation in the General Fund and the remainder to fund the annual \$20,000 contribution to First Town Downtown (FTDT), which

currently comes from the Community Services portion of the General Fund. Karnes asked for the rationale for funding FTDT through the TIF and whether that was the expectation going forward. Souza said that FTDT work is related to Windsor Center and an appropriate use of TIF funds and the expectation is that FTDT would be funded this way in subsequent years. Selig-Bennett made a motion to recommend said proposed use of TIF to the Town Council, Bill Davis second. Karnes asked about the use of TIF for FTDT and McMahon stated that the District Master Plan included language to that effect. Karnes noted that he likes the use of TIF for FTDT. Motion approved unanimously.

b. Blueprint Robotics Project

McMahon stated that the Town Council authorized entering into a Fixed Assessment Agreement with Blueprint Partners. Such agreement spoke of starting construction within six months of site plan approval. Blueprint received site plan approval in May 2023 which would result in a requirement to begin construction by November 2023. Blueprint requested a six month extension to that requirement which was authorized with construction to begin by May 2024. Blueprint has reached out stating that they will not meet a May 2024 construction date and asked for another extension. Blueprint has continued to line up their financing for the project and have been vetting various investors. Blueprint is hoping to close on the land by July 1, 2024. Staff will work with Blueprint to propose a revised date for the start of construction to the Town Council and amend the agreement as necessary. Karnes suggested tying the purchase of the property to any proposed extension. The Town has no financial liability in providing an extension. Selig-Bennett stated that since there is no financial liability to the town then it makes sense to allow the company the opportunity to move forward. McMahon stated that staff has on-going conversations with the company's CEO. Souza said the company is still high on this location and the fact that it is a manufacturer helps diversify the tax base. Selig-Bennett made a motion to recommend to the Town Council an extension to Blueprint's fixed assessment agreement, Rice seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Windsor Center Road Diet

McMahon stated that Representative Garibay has secured \$1.2M from the State of Connecticut, \$200K for design and \$1M for construction, and through Congressman Larson's office the town secured \$3M in federal funds for the project. The Town is pursuing the project design with VHB. The project envisions reducing the number of travel lanes from two in each direction to one in each direction with a center turn lane. First Town Downtown and other stakeholders requested that the town explore a roundabout at the intersection of Broad Street, Palisado Avenue and Poquonock Avenue. VHB determined that offset roundabouts would be required to include the intersection of Poquonock Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue. VHB did a feasibility study and determined there is sufficient space to install such roundabouts primarily within the existing right-of-way. McMahon stated that some advantages of roundabouts are constant traffic flow, reduced speeds and reduced injuries and vehicle damage when accidents do occur. Souza mentioned that also through public feedback, the town is looking at the feasibility of adding a bike lane on one or both sides of Broad Street. The next step is to communicate with CT DOT about these concepts since it is a state road.

McMahon said there would be additional opportunities for public feedback and due to the cost of the project it will be required to go to referendum. Construction would not likely begin until sometime in 2025. Selig-Bennett mentioned the project will slow down traffic, improve pedestrian safety and help the businesses downtown. McMahon stated that the roundabouts would have a mountable curb for larger vehicles. Karnes asked about pedestrians navigating the roundabouts. The roundabout concept needs more vetting with the design firm so that is yet to be fully understood. Souza said there may be opportunities to pursue improvements to the overall parking management for the town center separate from this project.

3. ITEMS FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Chamber of Commerce – McMahon stated that the Chamber Auction was slated for Friday, April 26th at the New England Air Museum.

First Town Downtown – Fredette said bands have been lined up for the summer concert series and they have secured the vendors for the farmers market. They are working with the Police Department on National Night Out the first Tuesday in August. Monarch Fest has been moved to September.

Bradley Development League – McMahon stated that Bradley Development League was hosting a business gathering at the New England Air Museum on March 21st. Chris DiPentima, President and CEO of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association is keynoting the event. Kevin Dillon, Executive Director of the Connecticut Airport Authority will also speak.

4. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

Selig-Bennett stated that she saw the fence go around the Ardery Chevrolet site. McMahon gave an update on Bowfield Green. The contractor will be Montagno out of Waterbury and a building permit application has been applied for and is being reviewed by town staff. Rice asked if there was any hazards on the site. McMahon stated that the site previously had an environmental site assessment through a regional grant and that the property was remediated based on the assessment.

Karnes asked when we get the building permit fees and Souza said at time of application.

Karnes asked about the Stanadyne property. IRG acquired the property through bankruptcy. They are a large developer across the country that repositions manufacturing plants. The Town Council authorized grant applications for \$3.5M to remediate the large manufacturing plant and \$200,000 to conduct an environmental assessment on the two smaller buildings through the state's brownfields program. IRG is marketing the property as the Connecticut River Business Park.

Graff asked about the Carville Ranch House site. McMahon said they got approval for a gas station, convenience store and car wash for phase one. The approval is contingent upon the developer getting CT DOT approval for installation of a traffic signal. Such installation would necessitate the relocation of the entrance to Violet Street which is a town road.

Graff asked about Bart's. McMahon stated that an operator of the Lobster Tales Food Trucks have entered into a lease with the property owner. They plan to operate the food truck next to the restaurant which will be rehabbed and serve the traditional Bart's food such as hot dogs and burgers. They also plan to have a beer garden as a future phase.

Graff asked about the vacant Subway space. A barbecue business was interested but that fell through. McMahon said that the hope is to have another restaurant open the location.

Rice spoke about the vacant bank next to his business.

5. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Giovanni's is looking to relocate to the Windsor Shops. They purchased land in Wilson but realized they would not be able to build within the time that they need to be out of their current space.

Also in the Windsor Shops, Don's Catering is planning to open where Windsor Farms was located. There will also be a restaurant called Florette's Caribbean Restaurant.

6. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Selig-Bennett moved approval of the minutes for November 15, 2023. Rice seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.