

COVENTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 25, 2016, Town Hall Annex

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order by the chair at 7:35PM. Members present were Sondra Stave, Bill Jobbagy, Mark Lavitt, Carol Polsky, Sam Belsito, Barbara Barry and Tim Liptrap. Members absent were: Alex Konigsberg and Dick Giggey- excused. Staff present were John Elsesser and Eric Trott. Council Chair Julie Blanchard was also present.

A motion was made by Tim and seconded by Sam to accept the minutes of the January 28, 2016 meeting. The motion, with no corrections, was approved unanimously.

Business Survey- There were a number of high school students in the audience and Tim asked them to provide input to our business survey. Their responses follow:

Where do you buy your clothing?- the mall, on line.

Where do you go for restaurants? (in order of responses) Storrs, Willimantic, Manchester, Vernon, Tolland

Where do you get groceries? Big Y, Stop-n-Shop, Price Chopper, Walmart, Highland Market

Do you plan to stay in Connecticut after graduation? Most said no, a few planned to stay for a few years and then leave.

What businesses would you like to see in town? Taco Bell, places to “hang out”, coffee shop, Smoothies, Cumberland Farms, places that are unique that other towns do not have, mini-golf, adventure park.

Your thought on the Farmers Market- Go infrequently, some parents go, prices are high, but quality is good, no activities for our age group.

Andrew Ladyga attended and spoke about his pending extension for a permit for a used car lot on Route 44. His intent is still for a used car lot, though at a reduced scale from the original permit. He had no specific plans for anything other than the car lot, though he was aware of the pending sewer extension and was open to new uses. He very much wished to get an extension from P&Z for his car lot.

A motion was made by Mark and seconded by Tim to recommend to P&ZC that he receive his permit extension. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports:

John and Sondra reported that the Library expansion committee is in ongoing discussions with the Town Council sub-committees regarding the library expansion and ownership.

Barbara reported that the Winter Farmers Market has seen a consistent attendance of 350+ attendees and 35 vendors who are very pleased with the market. She also reported that there is a group of dedicated volunteers who will continue to run the market through next year.

Carol discussed the need for attainable housing particularly for the elderly, as she has personally heard about this need. Infrastructure issues were discussed.

COVENTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
2/25/2016- Page 2 of 2

Eric reported that the Farmers Market Operating Committee of five members is now active. EDC will continue their support of this committee. Also traffic issues at the market have been discussed with the town engineer and the UCONN Traffic Institute and recommendations will be made. Plans are still under discussion regarding local business links to the market.

Eric has updated the EDC marketing toolkit and presented it for EDC review.

Eric presented the first draft of the planned business survey, discussion followed. EDC members will provide further feedback.

Tim reported on the successful business forum on "Search Engine Optimization". The attendees were pleased with the forum. Discussed creating a video for future use.

The Village Business forum planned for the Route 31 construction information is now targeted for mid-April. John reported that construction will begin to some extent next month and fully by April. He is working with the contractor on the timing and costs of various elements of the project.

Eric reported that there has been some interest in the old Antiques building at the corner of Stonehouse Road. The site has some brownfield issues.

Eric reported that the Arts Guild has met with the Parks & Recreation Commission to help plan their work. EDC will continue to support the Arts Guild.

John reported the discussions will be held next month on the Rt. 44 sewers regarding a formal agreement with Bolton and Manchester.

John reported that Mr. Bogginni is discussing expanding his business on Bread & Milk St. Also the Tracy Mill construction will start in March for sewer and water tie-in. Also, he has signed a contract for the design of the sidewalks from the First Church to the Library.

John noted that CNG will be holding an information meeting on the evening of Feb. 29th to discuss bringing natural gas from Mansfield Depot to the Town Hall complex.

A motion was made at 9:30 to adjourn by Tim and seconded by Carol.

The next meeting is March 24, 2016 in the Town Hall conference room B.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Jobbagy
Vice-Chair