



**TOWN OF CROMWELL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

***Regular Meeting
7:00 P.M. Thursday August 19, 2010
Room 224 Cromwell Town Hall***

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Dick Nobile, Robert Jahn, Joe Fazekas, Mertie Terry and Stan Stachura (arr. at 7:07pm)

ABSENT: Merrie Buchsbaum

ALSO PRESENT: Town Planner Craig Minor, Selectman Al Waters and First Selectman John Flanders

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Nobile called the meeting to order at 7p.m.
2. **Roll Call/Seating of Alternates:** No alternates were present.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** A **motion** was made by Mr. Fazekas and **seconded** by Ms. Terry to approve the agenda with the addition of item 5.d. Marketing Plan and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

4. **Public Comments:**

Myron Johnson, 7 Pleasant Street, stated that a client used one of the coupons that were sold at the Traveler's Tournament and that he supported the effort made by the previous EDC Coordinator. Mr. Johnson talked about the man interested in putting in a restaurant at 61 River Road, the downtown area, the house that the town refused to purchase in the downtown area, the change in ownership of the gas station in front of the old Sav Mor and the lack of being able to develop the property as a larger piece. Chairman Nobile stated that Mr. Shingleton wanted to purchase the property in the downtown area and that he was also in favor of purchasing the property but communication broke down and the sale was taken off the table. Chairman Nobile explained that there needs to be a zone change on River Road in order for a restaurant to be located in that area but the developer was approved for a store. Chairman Nobile explained that a deal with Mr. Merindino fell through between him and Mr. Waters. Mr. Waters explained his position and why the proposal for purchase fell through. Chairman Nobile explained that during the interim when there was no Coordinator some things were not accomplished.

5. **New Business:**

a. ED Coordinator's Report:

First Selectman John Flanders stated that he hopes that by the next meeting a new Coordinator will be introduced. There are five candidates. Mr. Flanders explained some initiatives that he is undertaking. Mr. Flanders will be sending out a letter to those businesses that are unoccupied with an offer by the Town to do what they can to help get them occupied. Mr. Flanders has had meetings to make changes to the abatement plan for businesses and the façade program. Mr. Flanders stated that money in the STEAP fund will be used for engineering studies. Mr. Flanders updated the commission on the status of the County Line Drive and that an agreement has been reached and should be completed in the next few days but construction won't begin until other projects have been finished. Mr. Flanders is supportive of using new plastic signs to feature new businesses or honoring existing businesses.

Chairman Nobile would like to review the tax abatement plan and find out what the direct results are to the town. He feels that the abatements are best worked on with a coordinator. Mr. Flanders would like to think outside the box for example a way to work with the taxing of computer equipment which depreciates rapidly. Chairman Nobile would also like to work on supporting different types of businesses and not excluding such things as vehicles under tax abatement. Chairman Nobile commended Mr. Flanders for doing his homework on his proposals. Mr. Flanders would like it to be common knowledge that tax abatements are available for application. Mr. Stachura agrees that the information needs to be made available maybe through a brochure that includes how to follow up.

Chairman Nobile asked if the STEAP grant money for the façade program could be used in other parts of town and Mr. Flanders stated that the money can't be used but that he would like to find money to expand the program. Mr. Jahn asked if some of the money could be used to complete the Phase II study on the town owned land downtown and Mr. Flanders believes that it could be. Mr. Flanders stated that some of the money will be used to work on the wall to the south of the boat launch because it is deteriorating and that this use was approved by the State. Ms. Terry asked if there is a time frame for doing something for Melilli's restaurant and Mr. Flanders indicated that due to the work being done at Cider Hill, it is under slight delay.

First Selectman Flanders left the meeting after finishing his report.

Mr. Minor reported that he has obtained a copy of the STEAP grant discussed at the last meeting and will share it with the commission.

Mr. Minor, as requested, has obtained a copy of the blight list and included it in the agenda packet.

Mr. Minor asked about the receipt of a donation from Family Eye Care and Mr. Fazekas stated that Mr. Price had been soliciting donations for the website but that the donation is not earmarked for anything specific. Ms. Terry asked about ownership of the website and Mr. Minor stated that the new EDC Coordinator would need to have ownership transferred. Ms. Terry would like to website to be taken over by the town or that the town creates a new EDC site. Mr. Stachura asked if the town paid Mr. Price for the site and if the town attorney should be aware of the situation to avoid any future conflict. Mr. Minor would like to wait to have the new EDC Coordinator resolve this issue. Mr. Stachura requested that Mr. Minor gather any paperwork regarding it to prepare a new EDC Coordinator.

Ms. Terry stated that Mr. Flanders has already indicated that the EDC budget was overspent for the budge year and that the money to pay for the Travelers Championship will have to

come from elsewhere. Chairman Nobile stated that knowledge about the budget has been withheld from the commission for the last few years and reiterated that any money that comes out of the budget needs to be approved by the commission. Mr. Waters suggested asking Ms. Sylvester for information about what was paid to Mr. Price over the last year for the cost of the website. Payment to Mr. Price had to be approved by Mr. Mazurek. Chairman Nobile stated that no one has access to the site at this time. Mr. Minor has not visited the site.

b. Invoice from Traveler's Championship:

Mr. Minor had included the information on the invoice for the booth, etc... and researched the minutes of the EDC but couldn't find an approval by the commission for the expenditure.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Jahn and **seconded** by Ms. Terry to approve the invoice for the Traveler's Championship.

Discussion:

Chairman Nobile spoke with the former EDC Coordinator and found a charge for \$3,000 from three years ago for various support by the TPC. Mr. Minor stated that he will find out which fiscal year the bill will be paid for. Chairman Nobile is concerned that if the money is taken out of this year's budget it will affect this year's presence at the tournament. Mr. Stachura suggested contacting a representative from the tournament to see if it can be reduced. Ms. Terry stated that the invoice is \$3,000 which is a reduced amount. The previous motion was withdrawn.

An amended **motion** was made by Mr. Jahn and **seconded** by Ms. Terry to request that the Board of Finance approve payment for the invoice from the 2009-2010 fiscal year and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

c. Façade Program:

No action needed. Chairman Nobile asked if Mr. Minor to speak with Mr. Dayharsh about the upkeep of his property behind Stocking Triangle.

d. Marketing Plan:

6. Stimulating Economic Development:

- a. Marketing: Chairman Nobile would like a brochure to be printed professionally.

7. Old Business:

- a. Northern Tier Industrial Development: None.
- b. Main Street Revitalization Project: None.

c. Planning & Zoning Issues:

i. New Zoning Regulations:

Mr. Minor reported that the final draft has been completed and will be reviewed next Thursday by the subcommittee. It will then be presented on September 7, 2010 and if

approved by P&Z it will then be presented for a public hearing. Mr. Minor will email it to the commission and print out copies for those who would like them. Mr. Stachura requested a copy of the new map and Mr. Minor will email it. Mr. Minor stated that there are some name changes but no big zoning changes. Chairman Nobile asked if any changes were made on the Riverfront and Mr. Minor stated that there weren't but that it could be brought up at the hearing. Chairman Nobile would like this item on next month's agenda. Mr. Minor stated that the subcommittee loosened up the home occupation business's requirements.

d. Zoning Enforcement: None.

e. Stocking Triangle:

Mr. Jahn asked when Stocking Triangle will be finished. Mr. Stachura noticed that the work is almost done.

A **motion** was made by Ms. Terry and **seconded** by Mr. Fazekas to approve the addition of agenda item 7.f. A-Frame sign for EDC and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

f. A-Frame sign for EDC:

Chairman Nobile displayed the sample A-Frame. Mr. Stachura suggested buying something that could be used more long term. Chairman Nobile stated that the signs would be for 'Business of the Month' and 'Welcome to Cromwell'. Mr. Minor will check to see if the sign would be in compliance of the signage regulations and Ms. Terry stated that Mr. Curtin would like a letter with information about how long and where the sign will be for the month. Chairman Nobile will order one sign with the letters to see how it works and if it goes well a second sign will be purchased. Chairman Nobile will visit other places to see how the sign looks.

Mr. Stachura asked about a proposal that had been approved to install two poles in the downtown area that would allow for signs to be hung over the street thereby avoiding the need to get permission from the telephone company. Chairman Nobile stated that the proposal never went anywhere.

Mr. Stachura asked about signs that had been paid by Walmart for entrances to town with information on civic groups. Mr. Minor believes that P&Z had approved this. Mr. Stachura asked about the upkeep of the welcome sign off of Rte. 9 and Mr. Minor will look into it and see if the town can maintain it. Mr. Waters stated that there is one sign that Mr. Grubel didn't get paid for but that the sign is in the Quonset hut. If the sign is placed high enough, civic organizations can have their information placed on the lower portion. Mr. Stachura will look into this.

8. Communications (see attached P&Z Report; Zoning Enforcement Report; P&Z Minutes):

Ms. Terry asked about what is going on with GKN and Chairman Nobile reported that they are in contact with Comcast. Chairman Nobile has left messages with Mr. Cacase but has not heard back from him. Ms. Terry asked about the Riverport Festival and if the EDC will have a presence. Chairman Nobile stated that without a Coordinator there won't be booth. Mr. Keithan reported that no donations were received from any of the businesses.

Chairman Nobile stated the importance of having a Coordinator to facilitate programs and make business contacts for the EDC.

Mr. Waters stated that a convenience store and Dunkin Donuts put in at 538 Main Street and suggested that the EDC support the project as submitted to the Town Planner. Mr. Stachura feels that the business owners should make a presentation to the EDC in order to get the support of the EDC. Mr. Minor stated that he has viewed the plans and doesn't see that anything is out of order and suggests that the EDC make a motion to give general support of the application.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Fazekas and **seconded** by Mr. Jahn to support the convenience store and Dunkin Donuts. Ms. Terry abstained. Mr. Stachura questioned whether this show of support would set a precedent. Mr. Fazekas, Mr. Jahn and Chairman Nobile *approved the motion*. Mr. Stachura was not seated and didn't vote.

Mr. Jahn asked if the rules for abatement are going back to the previous administrations or the old rules and Chairman Nobile isn't sure. Mr. Jahn asked for more information about the Willowbrook Road project. Mr. Minor stated that one building will have a business below with apartments above and another will be a Laundromat and bar. Mr. Minor stated that an appropriate bond will be put in place. Mr. Jahn read a paragraph from the P&Z minutes and Mr. Minor explained that P&Z has people ask all of their questions and then the developer responds.

9. **Chairman's Comments/Commissioners' Comments:** Chairman Nobile is pleased that the First Selectman is taking an interest in the EDC. Chairman Nobile stated that he has reviewed the five responses for the RFP for the new EDC Coordinator. Chairman Nobile is pleased and the commission
10. **Approval of Minutes:** A **motion** was made by Mr. Jahn and **seconded** by Mr. Fazekas to approve the minutes of July 2010 and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*
11. **Good & Welfare**
12. **Adjourn:** A **motion** was made by Mr. Jahn and **seconded** by Ms. Terry to adjourn at 9:09pm and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Potter
Clerk