

1
2
3
4
5 **Economic Development Commission**
6 **Regular Meeting Minutes**
7 **January 8, 2018**
8

9 **Present:** Joe Mirra, Chair
10 Jim Wolfe, Vice-Chair
11 Tom Collette, Commissioner
12 Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner
13 Mark Gingras, Commissioner
14 Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
15 Hank Baum, Alternate
16 Russ Mills, Alternate
17 Ed Zavaski, Alternate/Voting Member
18

19 **Absent:** Gary Fappiano, Commissioner
20

21 **Others Present:** Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
22 Lynn Wolff, Secretary
23 Richard Couch, Martinez, Couch & Associates
24 Rima Laukaitis, Martinez, Couch & Associates
25 Milton Gregory Grew, Architect
26 John Hall
27

28 Chair Joe Mirra called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. The
29 Chair asked Ed Zavaski to serve as a voting member.
30

31 **1. Discussion and possible actions on presentations by Rusty Rogers and John Hall –**

- 32 • Tim Ryan said that Mr. Rogers was unavailable. Mr. Couch of Martinez, Couch & Associates, was here to
33 make the presentation about a proposed project on Toelles Road. Tim gave a brief introduction to the
34 project and then introduced Mr. Couch. Mr. Couch explained that the 25-acre former pitch pine sand plain
35 site on Toelles Road is currently owned by Allnex. As proposed by Rusty Rogers, the project will be done
36 in several phases. In the first phase, it will take 2-3 years to excavate and sell the sand. After the sand is
37 excavated, the property will resemble the topography of the FedEx parcel. Two buildings are proposed: a
38 250,000 sf building (designed right now for fulfillment use) and a smaller 7,000 sf building.

39 Joe Mirra asked what the next steps are. Mr. Couch said they will request approval from IWWC. Since
40 there will be no offsite discharge of water used in the excavation process and there are no wetlands within
41 50' of this site, they hope for a quick determination. Next the proposal will go before the PZC. After that,
42 there are two state permits for which they must apply – storm water management through DEEP and an
43 industrial processing permit. They hope to accomplish these steps within the next 3-6 months. **Mark**

44 **Gingras made a motion to accept and support, through the entire process, this proposal for the**
45 **development of the 25-acre site on Toelles Road as presented on behalf of Mr. Rusty Rogers by Mr.**
46 **Couch; Rosemarie Preneta seconded the motion.** Jim Wolfe asked that we put this support in the form
47 of a letter. Joe Mirra asked Mr. Couch how the organizations that conducted the original studies and
48 prepared reports about the pitch pine sand plain, habitat and insects feel about the proposed project. Mr.
49 Couch said that both organizations now support the project – the site is no longer an active pitch pine sand
50 plain and the insects that existed there in 2000 are greatly reduced in number, due to other environments
51 taking over on this site. Tim Ryan mentioned that Mr. Rogers has done environmental studies over three
52 seasons—spring, summer and fall. In all cases, the study results show a depleted sand plain environment.
53 **By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

54 Chair Mirra thanked Mr. Couch and Ms. Laukaitis for making the presentation.
55

- 56 • Mr. Grew, architect for the project proposed by Mr. John Hall for the L-shaped property that sits at 50 South
57 Main and 361 Center Street, briefed the EDC about the proposed project. The 3-story building was last
58 used as an office/medical building. Since the demand for office space has declined, Mr. Hall plans to go
59 before PZC on Wednesday, January 10, and request a special permit to change the zoning to allow for
60 mixed-use development. If approval is received, the existing building will be converted to residential
61 apartments and a 3-story retail/commercial building will be constructed along 361 Center Street. Right now
62 they are considering a building designed for restaurant use. This new building will have a 2-lane pass
63 through under the 2nd and 3rd floors so these top two floors span the entire width of the Center Street parcel
64 and allow for access to parking in the rear of the site.

65 Jim Wolfe asked how many apartments are proposed. Mr. Grew said 22 one-bedroom apartments will
66 be built, six on the lower level, and eight on floors 2 and 3. Rosemarie Preneta asked what the average
67 square footage will be for the apartments; Mr. Grew said between 626 and 755 sf.

68 Jim Wolfe asked how parking will be controlled for the apartments; many times people who want to go
69 to the Post Office will park there. Mr. Grew said there are adequate spaces for 1.5 parking spots/dwelling;
70 right now they plan to have 1 assigned spot/dwelling and other spots that will be open for additional cars or
71 visitors. Also, Mr. Hall can choose to get a credit if he allows some public parking spaces, which is
72 currently being considered, especially since people use the Post Office during the day while residents will
73 need the parking at night. Patricia Cymbala said Mr. Hall might want to consider that the people who might
74 rent these apartments (Millennials and seniors) might work from home and therefore use more parking
75 during the day.

76 Tim asked Mr. Grew if he knew how much money will be spent on this project; Mr. Grew said they
77 haven't prepared a cost estimate yet.

78 Joe Mirra asked how long this project will take to complete; Mr. Grew said converting the existing
79 building to residential apartments should move very quickly but the new building will take longer to
80 complete.

81 Tim Ryan asked what the square footage of the new building will be; Mr. Grew said 5,000 sf. Tim said
82 he supports this project because it will bring more residential sites to the Town Center, one of the aims of
83 the TOD.

84 Jim Wolfe said he vaguely remembered a problem with glass facades (which is the current design for
85 the new building fronting Center Street). Mr. Grew said that will not be a problem for this zone.

86 Ed Zavaski asked if Kacie Hand supports this project; Mr. Grew said yes. Tim Ryan added that he,
87 Kacie Hand and John Hall walked this site over a year ago and it was Kacie who came up with the idea of
88 adding retail/commercial on Center Street to comply with the Town's mixed use regulations. This will bring
89 over a half-million in tax revenue if the proposal goes forward.

90 **Patricia Cymbala made a motion to accept and support the project as proposed by Mr. Hall and**
91 **presented by Mr. Grew; Ed Zavaski seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

92 Joe Mirra thanked Mr. Grew and Mr. Hall for attending and said a few members from the EDC will
93 attend the Wednesday PZC meeting in support of the project.

94
95 **2. Election of Officers –**

96 **Jim Wolfe made a motion that Joe Mirra continue as Chair; Mark Gingras seconded the motion. By**
97 **a vote of 6 yeases with 1 abstention by Mr. Mirra, the motion carried.**

98 **Joe Mirra made a motion that Jim Wolfe continue as Vice-Chair; Ed Zavaski seconded the motion.**
99 **By a vote of 6 yeases with 1 abstention by Mr. Wolfe, the motion carried.**

100
101 **3. Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated December 4, 2017 – Mark Gingras**
102 **made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Patricia Cymbala seconded the motion. By a vote of**
103 **5 yeases with 2 abstentions (Commissioners Collette and Zavaski), the motion carried.**

104
105 **4. Review of Monthly Expenditure Report – Jim Wolfe had two questions regarding the November report as**
106 **attached to the agenda: what is the capital money for and will we need to transfer money into Transportation.**
107 **Tim Ryan said the capital money was budgeted for a new highway sign near the new entrance ramp along**
108 **Route 15; it has been determined that there is no available spot for a new sign in this location so Marketing will**
109 **discuss alternative plans for this money. Regarding the transportation account, the secretary said that,**
110 **although the amount in this account was increased for this year, it is likely that money will need to be**
111 **transferred from another account to cover costs through the end of the fiscal year. Staff will probably increase**
112 **the amount in the FY18-19 budget.**

115 **5. Committee Reports**

116 • **Marketing –**

- 117 ➤ **Update on meeting discussion** – Mark Gingras highlighted some of the items mentioned in the
118 January 3 minutes attached to the agenda packet.

119 The Committee continued to work on the leaflet to be inserted in an electric bill and hope to
120 bring a final draft to the EDC in March. RFQ's for the printing are needed.

121 As suggested by Russ Mills at the December EDC meeting, the Committee discussed the use
122 of more social media; they had a good discussion and want to discuss it more at its next meeting.
123 Hank Baum said his son works for a digital marketing company and would be happy to discuss
124 various aspects of using social media; Mark said it might be a good idea to have Hank's son attend
125 a Marketing Committee meeting.

126 The Committee continues to think of ways to attract tech companies and also decided to “stay
127 the course” in regards to its marketing plan. Staff will develop a budget accordingly.

128 Jim Wolfe said that the EDC needs to continue to market the Town and suggested purchasing
129 windbreakers with the EDC logo for Commissioners. He thought the windbreakers would be good
130 advertisement and a good way to start a discussion about the Town. Mark said the Committee will
131 consider the idea but cautioned that, due to budget constraints, always strives to use our budget in
132 the best way possible. Mark said one suggestion might be to purchase more name tags, which are
133 inexpensive, so a Commissioner has one in each car he uses and might wear them more often.

- 134 ➤ **Next meeting:** February 28, 2018 at 9:30 a.m., Room 205.

136 • **P&Z Liaison –**

- 137 ➤ **Update on committee activities** – Jim Wolfe said, besides the two presentations tonight, he had
138 nothing else to add, except to remind Committee members that the item concerning 50 S. Main
139 Street is item #3 on the PZC meeting agenda for Wednesday, January 10.

- 140 ➤ **Next meeting** – None scheduled.

142 • **Retention/Incentives –**

- 143 ➤ **Update on committee activities** – Rosemarie Preneta said they will meet on January 31 and
144 make a report in February. She heard the company visits in early December were very successful
145 and that the companies visited appreciated the visits. Tim Ryan agreed and said Jim Wolfe's idea
146 to hand out Certificates of Appreciation to each company visited has been very well received.

- 147 ➤ **Next meeting** – January 31 at 3:30 p.m.

148 **6. Chairman's remarks** – Chair Mirra thanked everyone (Commissioners and staff) who work very hard to make
149 our Town move forward. Joe wanted to commend and congratulate everyone -- Thank you for your work.
150

151

152 **7. Staff reports/regional matters** – Tim Ryan reviewed items from the December monthly report sent out with
153 the agenda. Highlighted items include:

154 The State of the Town will be held on January 19, 12-2 at Ashlar Village. *It was asked that the secretary*
155 *email the invitation sent to local businesses to the EDC as well.* Joe Mirra asked each Commissioner attending
156 to arrive between 11:30 and 11:45 so that they can help greet our guests. Mark Gingras suggested that Tim
157 assign Commissioners to tables so that each table of guests also has a few EDC members.

158 Tim mentioned that Rosemarie Preneta and Gary Fappiano have been reappointed as Commissioners by
159 the Mayor; congratulations!

160 The Town received a TOD grant in the amount of \$175,000; this is the first grant application that Susan
161 Schott of the Program Planning Office shepherded after being promoted to Administrative Grants Secretary.
162 The grant is for surveying, preliminary design and evaluation of improvement of connectivity via streetscape
163 improvements regarding pedestrian traffic between the Town Center and the new railroad station.

164 Tim mentioned that the Made in Wallingford programs held at the Public Library have not had great
165 attendance and wondered if they should be suspended. Joe Mirra suggested holding them on a quarterly or bi-
166 annual basis. Mark Gingras suggested doing a program on public access TV.

167 Workforce development is probably the biggest issue right now, Tim said. A mid-December tour/visit to
168 Trumpf USA in Farmington was arranged, since Trumpf are well known for the successes they've experienced
169 in bringing German training initiatives to their CT facility. EDC Chair and staff; a representative from the Public
170 Schools and from the German-American Chamber of Commerce as well as six local manufacturers were
171 introduced to the training and apprenticeship program that Trumpf is using to develop their workforce. It was a
172 very informative meeting.

173 Best Buy plans to build an 80,000 sf warehouse/distribution building in Northrup Industrial Park.

174 Also, Tim mentioned that he feels we've had some real economic growth in 2017. Close to 50 new
175 businesses have opened and 14-16 expansions took place thus far. Mark Gingras asked the reason for the
176 expansions; Tim said taxes and electric rates are huge. However, the cost of operations is big and the need for
177 workforce, as mentioned previously, is problematic. Joe Mirra said he has been working with Hubcap and the
178 BOE to develop a feeder source for manufacturers. He feels the key to future success is developing a strong
179 summer job program for High School students. If every business in Town hired one student for six weeks, it
180 would make a big difference. We need to train the students so that when they graduate, they are prepared to
181 be good employees. Joe encouraged each Commissioner to talk to their business friends and encourage
182 hiring a student this summer. Mark Gingras said that businesses need a conduit for the postings of available
183 jobs. Joe said this is what the group at Hubcap will try to organize.

184
185 **8. Dates to Remember** – No additional comments were made.

186
187 **9. Community Involvement** – No comments.

188
189
190
191
192
193
194
195
196
197
198
199
200

Chair Mirra asked for volunteers to reset the meeting room back to classroom status. **There being no further business, Rosemarie Preneta made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.; Mark Gingras seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary