

Town of Stonington
Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2012

Attendees: Blunt White, Ed Planeta, Wendy Bury, Amy Arruda, Dan Oliveria, Robynne Madison
Guest: Ed Haberek

Call To Order: 7:05pm

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: Motion by Chairman White, Second - Ed Planeta upon amendment of the number of units in each phase of the Mystic Senior Living Center to total 130 units.

Old Business:

Business Guide – The Commission discussed the progress to date on the Business Guide looking for feedback on improvements, additions and format changes for better flow. Commission members discussed the desired end product, which would be to have the a brochure available at the Town Hall directing potential business owners to visit the EDC website where a full document would be accessible for download detailing each of the various aspects of starting a business in Stonington.

First Selectman Haberek noted it would be helpful to provide the actual point of contact within each department of the Town Hall so that visitors could establish more of a connection with the process.

Ed Planeta suggested the commission put the guide up on the website as soon as possible to get feedback from visitors. Placing an optional section for the visitors to provide information such as where they heard of the guide or website as well as if they felt it was helpful would help us to make it better over time.

Work continues on the guide to continue enhancements to sections as well as provide additional content not yet incorporated such as fees and who (Town or State) requires registration of business names.

The Guide would be an ideal deliverable for the May Round Table meeting showing the EDC has a value add role in the community. Additionally, discussion took place around offering an Entrepreneur Seminar with a local coach to attract prospective entrepreneurs to the area.

Website Update - RFP quote criteria for the maintenance of the website for the coming year was discussed as well as providing an additional page for the posting of the Business Guide. Selectman Haberek suggested the commission contact Maryanna Stevens to ensure that proper protocol is followed for the RFP process.

There were 74 visits to the website this past reporting period, up 25% with the most of the searches directed towards properties and maps.

The drastic rise in visits is suspected to be at the direction of the current administrator of the site, possibly using the site as a reference for his credentials.

Business Outreach - Selectman Haberek provide the Commission with an update on developments within the Town,

1. Another Movie is looking for a farm location to film. Walk through reviews were currently being scheduled for various locations.
2. Mystic Senior Living is going before Planning and Zoning and Selectman Haberek has scheduled a visit to Ellicott City, MD to tour a replica facility managed by Mooringside Homes.
3. A proposal has been brought forward by the Stonington Fishermans Association for the potential creation of a Lobster Hatchery at the Town Docks.
4. Additional parking has become available in downtown Pawcatuck off of Cogswell Street. Two parking lots owned by Cogshell Group have been opened to the public for parking.
5. Talks are still underway to determine what to do with the Campbell Grain building as the property is still in disrepair with an open roof letting in the elements to further destroy in interior of the building.
6. Way Finding signs are here and will be installed pending a final decision from State officials as to the best possible location. The signs will be located on State property.
7. Citation Officers have been elected
8. The permits for the Thread Mill issued in 2005 are valid for 9 years and still in effect therefore the owners have 2 more years to act upon their original business plan.
9. A brewery is looking at potential locations in Stonington

Regional and local tourism marketing - no update

BROM Builders – Mystic Senior Living Associates - no update

Planning for 2014 Conservation and Development - Member Wendy Bury has volunteered to represent the EDC on the POCD Committee.

Miscellaneous:

Member Bury has also agreed to stay on the EDC for an additional term.

The EDC discussed the available funds to support the Economic Feasibility Study for the Non-Profit Round Table. Funds were encumbered at the end of the FY11 for the project. The project is also looking to engage an individual from UCONN to analyze survey results, accessing the financial impact of each non-profit as well as provide proper weighting of selected survey questions.

Discussion around whether or not the EDC budget as well as that of the Town should have to pay membership dues to the surrounding Chambers of Commerce when the Town and EDC act in an advisory role rather than utilize the benefits offered by the Chambers. The EDC determined that the commission should vote to join any Chamber going forward.

New Business :

Goals and Objectives – As the budget cycle for FY12 quickly approaches, the EDC has been requested to complete a narrative for the goals and objectives for the fiscal year. Items to be discussed at the next EDC meeting are as follows:

1. RFP for the website – (February, 2012 due date)
2. Publishing the Business Guide – (March, 2012)

3. Solutions for Stonington Breakfast (Apr/May)
4. Entrepreneur Seminar
5. POCD 2014
6. Continue facilitation of New Business support - Business Outreach
7. Directory of all Non-Profit sponsored/provided programs in the Town.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:54pm

Approved 2/9/2012
Blair White
Chairman EDC