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Regular Meeting
Town of Vernon Economic Development Commission
Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 7:30 A.M.
Vernon Town Hall, 3rd Floor, 14 Park Place
Rockville/Vernon, CT

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jeff Cohen at 7:37 A.M. Commission members present were Bill McGurk, Peter Olson, Bill Breslau and Meghan Scranton. Absent were Jill Merriam, Dan Kennedy, Bruce Kellogg and Jim Sendrak. Also present was Mayor Daniel Champagne, and Economic Development Coordinator Shaun Gately.

2. Public Forum

There were no citizens present for the Public Forum.

3. Approval of Minutes from meeting on September 10, 2014

Motion was made by Peter Olson and seconded by Bill Breslau to accept the minutes of the September 10, 2014. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Economic Development Status Update

A. Current Projects

- **200 West Main St.** – Mr. Gately reported that the first round of DECD funding provided has been expended on the project and that the site has been visited by numerous state and local officials in recent weeks. Mr. Kaplan continues to work with state agencies to move project forward and will be pursuing additional funding sources. Mr. Cohen mentioned that the project had been featured in a recent edition of the *Hartford Business Journal*.
- **Loom City Lofts** - Mr. Gately reported that the project has closed on its financing and is moving forward. Reconstruction plans have been approved by SHPO and work is to begin this week. The project has changed scope since its first submission and will now include a residential component. Commercial space is expected on the first floor.
- **Talcott Brothers Mill** - The project is on hold with financing and tax credit complications. Project is slightly behind due to these delays.
- **Santini Development**- (1108 & 1116 Harford Turnpike) – the site has been cleared for 254 residential units. The commission discussed sidewalks and sidewalk gap funding for projects with a residential component. Mr. Gately will follow up to see where this fund stands.

- **Hartford Healthcare** – Construction begins at the former Adams Supermarket site in Tri-City Plaza with plans for 30,000 sq. ft. of offices and lab space.
- **Downtown Development** – Mr. Gately updated the commission on the status of discussions regarding redevelopment of downtown Rockville.

5. New Business

A. Schedule meeting dates for upcoming year- Motion was made by Meghan Scranton and approved by Bill McGurk to approve the following meeting dates:

1/14/15, 2/11/15, 3/11/15, 4/8/15, 5/13/15, 6/10/15, 7/8/15, 8/12/15, 9/9/15, 10/14/15, 11/4/15, 12/9/15 and 1/13/16.

All meetings will take place at 7:30 AM on the 3rd floor of Town Hall, in Council Chambers.

B. Set date for election of Officers – Mr. Cohen moved to hold a vote on the election of officers at the January 14, 2015 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Mayor Champagne provided the Commission with a sample copy of a quarterly “events” magazine that promote and highlight the town. The magazine will be distributed to each household beginning in the spring. Boards and Commissions, departments and organizations will be asked to provide short ‘proof-ready’ contents for inclusion. Details will follow.

6. Old Business

A. Three year Plan discussion

a. Signs – Mr. Gately informed the commission that the first sign has been ordered and delivery is expected by the end of the year. The sign will be placed at the end of ramp at exit 67 (westbound) as traffic studies indicate this exit has the highest traffic count. Public Works will install the sign and Parks and Recreation will landscape and maintain the site. Discussion took place regarding insurance of the sign, State right-of-ways and breakaway testing. Mr. Gately reported that there would be five signs placed around town at an estimated cost of \$25,000.

b. Organic Advertising campaign - Mr. Gately reported that he would like to explore the possibility of filming short video vignettes (6-10 seconds) of town-wide activities/groups that are “On the Move” as a way to reinforce the branding and create a buzz. Discussion took place regarding contests associated with the project and creating opportunities to have the most impact.

B. Community Outreach/ Events

a. Next event- Mr. Gately reported that NU (CL&P and Yankee Gas) may be willing to serve as a sponsor of the next Business Recognition even and that Kaplan Millworks is a possible location.

C. Grants Update – Mr. Gately reported that the following grants have been awarded since the spring and will be used for the following:

- a. **Assessment- \$200,000** - Brownfield Remediation on several mills
- b. **\$2,000,000 remediation** – Brownfield remediation on Amerbelle
- c. **\$400,000 MSIF Citizens Block** - external enhancements to Citizen's Block.

7. Ribbon Cuttings/ Ground Breakings/ New business

- a. 444 Hartford Turnpike – Mr. Gately reported that the site is close to opening.
- b. PetValu- (Kelly Rd) - Mr. Gately reported that façade improvements are ongoing and were part of the agreement for occupying the site. Mr. Gately reported that the retail corridor in that area is strong.

Discussion took place regarding activity and status of funds for an Intermodal Transportation site. The Commission requested that Mr. Gately contact Greater Hartford Transit District to find out if funds are still available. The item will be placed on the next Agenda for report back to the Commission.

Meghan Scranton inquired as to the status of the Holiday Inn site. Mr. Gately reported that a Certificate of Occupancy has been applied for. He also reported that the extended stay has experienced construction hold-ups and some cost overruns. Completion is set for 2016.

Motion was made by Bill McGurk and seconded by Mr. Olson to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting closed at 8:37 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Leslie S. Campolongo
Recording Secretary