T.C.

Regular Meeting
Town of Vernon Economic Development Commission
Wednesday, May 13th, 2015 at 7:30 A.M.
Town Hall, 3rd Floor, 14 Park Place, Vernon, CT

MINUTES

1. Call to Order
   Vice-chairman Bill Breslau called meeting to order at 7:38 am. Commissioners present: Peter Olson, Bill McGurk, Jill Merriam and Meghan Scranton. Absent: Jeffrey Cohen, Jim Sendrak, Dan Kennedy, and Bruce Kellogg.

   Also present was Economic Development Coordinator Shaun Gately and Recording Secretary Leslie Campolongo.

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2. Public Forum
   There was no one present for Public Forum.

3. Approval of Minutes from meeting on March 11th, 2015.
   Motion made by Mr. Olson and seconded by Jill Merriam to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2015. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Economic Development Status Update

   A. Current Projects
      - 200 West Main St – Mr. Gately reported that Mr. Kaplan held a Relay for Life & Block Party event on May 2, 2015. The event was well attended. Mr. Kaplan has received another loan from the state and afterward will be seeking private funding. It is anticipated there will be rentable portions of the property available soon.

      - Talcott Brothers Mill – Mr. Gately reported that the owners have received financing, and a closing is scheduled. There will be 84 residential units on the site and construction will be moving forward this summer.

      - Amerbelle Mill – Mr. Gately reported that Assessment work is nearly completed and reports are due in by the month's end. There were no unexpected findings. Remediation and selective demolition is anticipated this summer. The project is up for a potential additional $2 Million dollars in grant funding from DECD later today.

5. New Business
   A. Amtrak discussion
      Mr. Gately reported that he followed up with Transit-Oriented Development Director on the status of the states position in the matter. Discussion has been tabled due to recent incidents with Amtrak and will perhaps proceed as a congressional issue.

   B. Film Company
      Mr. Gately reported that a local filmmaker who is exploring the possibility of shooting a short film in Town has contacted him. The budget is approximately $500,000. He is interested in the historic homes and setting of Rockville.

6. <u>Old Business</u>

A. Three year Plan discussion

a. Sign update – Mr. Gately reported that the state has approved the plan for the sign. It will be placed at exit 67 by the McDonalds, and delivered to site by June.

b. Three Year Plan Document - Discussion took place regarding the EDC's 3 yr plan and whether items mentioned in the plan should be re-prioritized. The following suggestions were made:

- **Goals for Future Development**
  - **POCD**
    - **Ensure Utilities meet current and Future Demands *(Long Term)*** Mr. Breslau inquired as to whether incorporating sewers at exit 66 & 67 were a part of the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Gately reported that additional studies need to take place.

    - **Redevelop/Retenant Citizen's Block *(Medium Term)*** Mr. Olson expressed that additional parking for this parcel is a concern is the property is to be "moved". Discussion took place regarding other nearby parking sites available during the day. **Meghan Scranton moved that this item be moved from "Medium Term" priority to "Short Term" priority. Bill McGurk seconded motion. Motion passed unanimously.** Mr. Gately will advise the Mayor of the Commissions suggestion.

Short Term (12 Months) page 2
Meghan Scranton inquired as to the town's previous plan to update its website with video vignettes. Mr. Gately reported that he is awaiting a quote from a local company who would film 6-10 second YouTube/Vine video segments of local merchants using the Vernon on the Move tagline, which could be incorporated into the website.

Long Term (3-10 years) page 2
Discussion took place regarding graffiti p in town. Mr. McGurk commended the Department of Public Works for their efforts. Discussion took place regarding cameras and law enforcement actions. Mr. Breslau reported that the RDA has developed promotional material, which was presented to the courts. Mr. Gately shared that there is an "anti-graffiti" effort taking place in the area of downtown, which is spearheaded by Ken Kaplan that meets weekly to clean up trash, repaint over graffiti. Mr. Breslau suggested the Commission or Mayors Office, or both; recognize Mr. Kaplan for his work on this topic. Mr. Gately will advise the Mayor's Office of the Commissions desire to recognize this effort. Mr. Olson requested the graffiti topic be placed on next month's agenda. **Meghan Scranton motioned to discuss the Short, Medium and Long Term project discussion placed on next month's Agenda. Jill Merriam seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

Medium Term (1-3 years) page 2

Walkability: Mr. McGurk mentioned that the bank used to have a copy of the trails pamphlet available for distribution. Discussion took place regarding reprinting and having it available for downtown merchants to share with visitors.

B. Community Outreach/ Events

a. May 26, 2015 – Business Recognition Showcase- Eversource Energy, Image Works, and Key Hyundai sponsors; Kaplan Millworks is the location. Mr. Gately reported that approximately 17 are registered for the event, not including EDC.
   i. Caterer – Mr. Gately reported that Eversource Energy is providing caterer.
   ii. Awards/ certificates – Mr. Gately will confirm with Mr. Cohen regarding the certificates
   iii. Sound system – Mr. Gately will use the sound system provided by the Parks department.

Discussion took place regarding the need to promote the event, generate interest and share information with the Chamber of Commerce.

C. Grants Update

Mr. Gately provided the following update:

a. **Assessment-** $200,000- grant funds are expended
b. **$2,000,000 remediation** – demolition and remediation RFP to be issued in a month or so
c. **$400,000 MSIF** – For Citizens Block. Funding is from Department of Housing. Grant period is 2 or 3 years and can be used for façade upgrades only.
d. **$300,000 reuse planning grant** – will be used to conduct traffic impact study and pedestrian connectivity in downtown and greater Vernon area. RFQ/P is due out in June.
e. **19 Grove St.** – EPA will be conducting remediation and town will be demolishing several structures on the site, beginning in June.

D. Review of Implementation Plan and Three year Plan - previously discussed.

7. Ribbon Cuttings/ Ground Breakings/ New businesses

Mr. Gately reported on the following businesses

- Great Harvest Bread Co. - Franchise relocated from Manchester. Ribbon cutting is scheduled for June
- Menchies – opened last month
- Wingstop – opened this month
- StateFarm – opened this month

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made Mr. McGurk and seconded by Mr. Olson. Meeting adjourned at 8:37 am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Leslie S. Campolongo
Recording Secretary