

## **EDC SPECIAL MEETING**

Tuesday, January 21, 2021 at 5:30pm

Via Zoom Meeting

### **Approved Minutes**

*(Approved 2/2/21)*

**Call to Order:** Brett Mastroianni called the meeting to order at 5:33pm

**Members in Attendance:** Brett Mastroianni, Nicole Porter, Will Mason, Jennifer Dayton, Jennifer Strunk, Salvatore Cherenzia.

**Members absent:** Paul Simonds, Jennifer Anderson and Anthony Mazzella (alternate).

**Staff present:** Juliet Hodge, PDZO

**Public Present:** Mike Urgo, First Selectman, Nita Kincaid, Selectman, Robert Carlson, Selectman, Shawn Murphy, Carl Johnston.

**Public Comment:** Shawn Murphy read an email he sent to all EDC members expressing his concern about the initiative to lease/rent out the old Middle School and asked that the EDC members not support a marketing campaign to attract potential renters. Carl Johnston expressed his concern over the stop sign that was installed in front of his business, Shunock River Brewery and Café as it was supposed to be temporary but appears permanent now. Carl Johnston stated he will be losing parking spaces for his business due to the stop sign.

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** December 15, 2020: Approved as written. Workshop January 5, 2021: Approved as written.

**Treasurer's Report:** J. Hodge noted the only expenditures have been the radio ads for the Shop Local campaign.

**PDZO Report:** Committee reviewed J. Hodge's activity report. Some of the topics discussed:

- The "Site Finder" property listing service offered by AdvanceCT will be allowing municipalities to list/advertise select properties free of charge. J. Hodge listed a few sites she would like to see listed from town. The Site Selection magazine is also highlighting Connecticut in a future publication and J. Hodge stated that this would be another good way to shine a light on some of our vacant properties/parcels.
- J. Hodge discussed that seCTer has hired Sheri Cote (former VP of The Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT) to be the Regional Economic Development Manager. Sheri will be developing regional marketing material for us to use and could also help with ideas on how to better market our vacant properties.
- Little Man Bakery has applied for his Bakery License and hopes to be open soon. He is having some issues with the water.
- J. Hodge showed the concept plan for the proposed apartment complex with parking for the Fox Inn Lodge property. Most of the units will be one-bedroom. She expressed concerns about the expansive open lot parking and difficulty for snow removal. The same developers also discussed a possible commercial complex across the street on the Watrous property that would include a mix of recreational uses and hospitality uses.
- J. Hodge stated that Mitchell College is looking for internships for their students.

**New Business:**

- a. Presentation on proposed marketing plan for 298 Norwich Westerly Rd by Mike Uργο: M. Uργο discussed current marketing strategies to sell the entire former Middle School property with commission members. The Town is working with a realtor to assist with marketing. Several members commented on this initiative with some in favor of renting or selling the property and others not. The consensus was to try in earnest for 6 months to find someone and if we can't, then we will have to revisit the possibility of demolition of a portion of the building. Selectman Uργο and Carlson discussed possible future marketing options to further advance the search for an interested renter.

**Old Business:**

- a. FY 21-22 Budget-Review and Vote on Recommendations-Complete BOF Cover Sheet: J. Hodge and B. Mastroianni reviewed the proposed budget with Commission members. Motion made and seconded to accept the proposed budget as reviewed (S. Cherenzia/J. Dayton). Motion carried 6-0. The BOF Cover Sheet was completed.
- b. Update on potential Facility for Workforce Development/IT Training Program in NS by J. Dayton: J. Dayton read an email from the Consortium member who toured the old Middle School with stating they have an interest in the property but would like to clearly hear what the town's contribution would be to secure a grant. There were also some questions from the Consortium regarding work that needed to be done to the building as well as who would be responsible for the utility payments. They were also concerned that the Town was not all on the same page with respect to the future of the building. At this time, it was discussed that a sub-group of the Selectman comprised of various members of boards and commissions in town would form to discuss next steps with this project as well as future marketing campaigns for the building.
- c. Buy Local Campaign: The campaign seems to have stalled and hasn't had any additional entries since the last drawing. B. Mastroianni stated that he would try to revitalize interest in the program now that he was back from vacation.
- d. Business List/Directory: No new updates. The EDC members are hoping that if the EDC Assistant role is approved by the BOF that this would be the first project for this person to complete.

**Motion to adjourn at 7:19 pm (S. Cherenzia/N. Porter) Motion carried 6-0.**

Next EDC meeting is schedule on February 2, 2021 at 5:30p via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Porter & Juliet Hodge