

**Economic Development Commission
Minutes
June 7, 2010**

Members Present: Richard Nunn, Chairman
Joseph Mirra, Vice-Chairman
Mark Gingras
Rosemarie Preneta
Jim Wolfe

Members Absent: Tom Collette
Gary Fappiano

Others Present: Don Roe
Doreen DeSarro
John LeTourneau
Vincent Cervoni

Chairman Dick Nunn called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:33 p.m.

1. **Approval of Minutes dated April 5, 2010** – Joe Mirra made a motion to approve the April 5, 2010 minutes with no changes; Mark Gingras seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes dated May 25, 2010 – Mark Gingras made a motion to approve the May 25, 2010 minutes with no changes; Jim Wolfe seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

2. **Review of Expenditure Report 09-10** – There were no questions or comments on the report.
3. **Staff Reports on Marketing Program and Downtown/WCI** – Doreen DeSarro distributed and reviewed the marketing April and May reports. There were no questions about these reports.

Doreen also went over the reports on downtown/WCI. Mark Gingras asked if the ads in the Record-Journal are subsidized 50% or 25%? Doreen said the first time the ads were run, the EDC subsidized 50% of the cost; since then, 25%. The response by merchants has increased each time the ads have been offered.

4. **Subcommittee Reports**

- **P&Z Liaison** – Jim Wolfe reported the subcommittee attended a workshop with the Planning & Zoning Commission where, for discussion purposes, the I-5 zone was divided into 4 quadrants (North and South of I-91 and East and West of Rte. 68). There were several items of interest to the EDC:

Vinnie Mascia, Water/Sewer Division, attended the workshop and said that both the Department of Public Utilities and the State would not be in favor of altering the permitted

uses in the I-5 Zone, particularly in three of the quadrants (East/West of Rte. 68 and South of I-91). The subcommittee feels this strengthens the EDC's viewpoint.

At the end of the workshop, it was asked if the EDC would be in favor of adding residential use to the Southeast quadrant (behind the new hotel). The subcommittee told the Planning & Zoning Commission that they would ask the EDC. Joe Mirra and Jim Wolfe asked the EDC how to respond to the PZC; *it was unanimously decided to reply that the EDC is not in favor of adding residential uses to the I-5 zone.*

Since that workshop, Jim reported that another application for a zone change in the I-5 Zone has been filed and the EDC has been asked to comment. The EDC discussed the application and what changes, if any, were made since the last application by this party. *The EDC unanimously agreed that its position regarding retail use in the I-5 Zone is unchanged; staff was asked to prepare a response to Planning and Zoning regarding this latest application for a zone change restating its position.*

The subcommittee said an application to the Zoning Board of Appeals is forthcoming that might be of interest to the Commission – if granted, it would allow for two buildings per site in the IX Zone. This is a change from the current requirement that there be one principal building per site. The subcommittee said it will follow this issue, attend any relevant ZBA meetings and report back to the EDC.

- **Retention/Incentives** – Rosemarie Preneta said there was no report this month. Dick Nunn asked if there is any incentive program activity? Don Roe said there is some interest; in fact, it will be discussed Tuesday night at the Town Council meeting.
- **Marketing** - Mark Gingras mentioned that 12 out of 22 surveys have been completed and turned in to Doreen DeSarro. The subcommittee had first requested that the surveys be completed by the end of May; the deadline was extended to the end of June. Jim Wolfe commented that he has had some trouble connecting with one businessman who is frequently out of the country and was glad to hear of the extension. *Mark asked Doreen DeSarro to develop a list of what has been submitted to date by Monday, June 14;* Mark and Tom will then call the “captains” of the teams to see whether the remaining surveys can be completed by the deadline. Mark said the subcommittee wants to meet once the survey results are done; the EDC will discuss the surveys at the August 2 special meeting. Vincent Cervoni said there are vacancies along both Route 5 and Center Street. How can we get these areas more attractive and get those vacancies get filled? The EDC explained that it had met recently with a Route 5 property owner who expressed several concerns about that area of Town. The EDC suggested that one of the first steps would be for him to contact other Route 5 property owners and form a merchants' association, similar to the downtown group. Once such a group is formed and it decides on what issue it wants the EDC to help with, it should come back before the Commission. So far, that property owner has not yet returned. Dick Nunn reminded everyone that there is activity on one of the larger vacant properties – the former Merriam Motors property. John LeTourneau said that there is some concern about what the building on this property will look, given Wallingford's lack of design standards. Don Roe said that the issue of whether or not the Town has design standards would have to be discussed with the Planning & Zoning Commission. A considerable amount of EDC staff/subcommittee time has been spent looking at design standards in other towns; however, the final decision is not the EDC's to make. Joe Mirra suggested that, if the Town Council has concerns, they should consider a workshop with the Planning & Zoning Commission and the EDC about this.

Dick Nunn asked what had happened to the idea to move the railroad station? The commuter rail project got put on hold because the State, along with Massachusetts and Vermont, is trying to get federal money for a high-speed rail line. Connecticut is one of six who are still in the running for these funds and will be submitting a second application this summer. Don Roe said that the idea was to move the platform; not the station. There was additional discussion about the possible locations for the platform.

5. Regional Matters

- **Central CT Alliance for Economic Development** – Doreen DeSarro said that the latest issue of the e-newsletter from this organization was attached to her monthly report. Nothing further to report.
- **New Haven Manufacturers Association** – Don Roe said the EDC had joined this organization because their legislative agenda matches closely with Wallingford's. Due to other commitments, staff was unable to attend the NHMA annual meeting. Since joining the association this year, staff has been disseminating any pertinent e-mails it receives to the Commission. If a particular e-mail is important, Mark Gingras requested that staff ask if a Commissioner is able to attend; *Don said that he will do this*. Joe Mirra said that the meetings take place in downtown New Haven and that the membership is made up of people from surrounding towns. Joe said members should take the time to look at the e-mails from this organization – the topics are very interesting. John LeTourneau asked who can attend these meetings; Dick Nunn said any Commissioner may attend. Don explained that this is the first year the EDC is a member of NHMA; interaction will probably increase next year.
- **Regional Growth Partnership** – Don Roe said RGP now has a new Executive Director and gave those present an overview of the organization. The Town is not currently a member of this organization but might rejoin depending on the direction the organization takes under new leadership.

Don distributed a letter, dated May 17, 2010, from the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) concerning the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). In order to be eligible for federal funding, Wallingford might be forced to join a regional organization. Mark Gingras asked if there is any time frame. Doreen DeSarro said we don't know yet; the State must first divide the towns into regions.

Don said that the paper recent reported on auto auction issue in Meriden and asked the Commission to continue to be vigilant.
- **Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce** – Don Roe reported that he attended the annual meeting; Governor Rell made an appearance at the event.

Joe Mirra told members that the Chamber now runs the Summer Youth Employment Program; there's a lot of funding available. Joe said it involves a minimal amount of paperwork and urged everyone to consider hiring students and young adults through this program.
- **Workforce Alliance** – Joe Mirra said the customer service training meeting was well attended. After the meeting, it was determined that it would be difficult to have a community college run a course because the needs for each company were too different.

Joe mentioned that Workforce Alliance is working on green jobs; stimulus money is available.

Dick asked is there were any further questions or comments; John LeTourneau said he forgot to mention that he talked to Liz Landow and she apologized for not attending tonight's meeting. Dick Nunn asked Doreen DeSarro if she is in contact with Liz; Doreen said they frequently talk to each other – sometimes three times a day.

- 6. Discussion Regarding Presentation for FY2010-11 Budget** – John LeTourneau asked if the members wanted he and Vincent Cervoni to leave; they were told they were welcome to stay. Don Roe told members that staff had hoped to have their sections retyped before the meeting; however, they won't be done until around noon on Tuesday. The rewrites can either be picked up or e-mailed. *Staff will be available at 6 p.m. in Room 205 in case Commissioners have any questions or comments about their part in the presentation.*

There being no further business, Joe Mirra made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.; Jim Wolfe seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Wolff