



Minutes
April 5th 2023

- I. **Call to Order & Roll Call ~ 5:35 pm**
 - a. Commissioners: Nishant Sahoo, Margaret Hirsch, Jason Rusk, Cameron James
 - b. Liaisons: Aaron Brooks
 - c. Staff: Cierra Patrick
 - d. Presenter/ Guest: Daria Colbath
- II. **Introductions**
 - a. Cameron James, New Commissioner
 - b. Aaron Brooks, New Groton Utilities Liaison
- III. **Approval of Minutes ~**
 - a. Motion to approve minutes of January 4th 2023; February 1st 2023; and March 1st 2023
 - i. Motion made by Nishant Sahoo
 - ii. Seconded by Margaret Hirsch
 - iii. Decision 4-0-0
- IV. **Public Comments ~ None**
- V. **New Business**
 - a. EDC By Laws
 - i. Bylaws amendments:
 1. Two section
 - ii. Jason Rusk will draft a bylaw revision that will be shared for further discussion at a future meeting.
 - b. GU Update
 - i. Please refer to the Groton Utilities report
 - ii. Commercial sector has not recovered from the Pandemic
 - iii. Rate competitiveness: 44% below Ever sources (\$110 per month less)
 - iv. Transmission Upgrade (A significant infrastructure project) : 3 Primary line come in; 2 are 115 volts; the third line is currently 69 volts and is being upgraded to 115 volts.
 - v. HVAC Programs both for residents and commercial:
 1. Residential rebate up to \$5000.00 for the equipment (outdoor compressor)
 - a. [Conservation - Residential Energy Conservation Center - Groton Utilities](#)
 2. Commercial rebate is \$3000.00 per ton or 80% of the project whichever is less.
 - a. [Commercial and Industrial - Groton Utilities](#)
- VI. **Old Business**
 - a. Business Outreach goal of 1 businesses pre month pre commissioner
 - i. BluDot Platform Update:
 1. 327 business profiles, 20 logged activities, 13 Business connections.



- ii. Commissioner reminder to log Business Outreach activity
- iii. Staff will send Business Outreach task via Bludot
- iv. If we want to engage all City of Groton Business within a year, that will make an ambitious goal of 4 (four) business connections pre commissioner per month.
- v. Staff will check latest activity in Bludot to confirm and assign task
- vi. Staff will coordinate another Bludot Session in 2023

b. Staff Report:

i. Economic Development Grant Program

- 1. Buford's Family Restaurant Minor Façade Application
- 2. Angelique Aesthetics Minor Façade Application ~ 256 Thames St.
 - a. Looking to do signage, windows, landscaping, and outdoor seating
 - b. EDC ages this is a Minor Façade Improvement
- 3. Commissioner questions:
 - a. Do we receive application before or after projects are completed?
 - b. Do we accept amendments to the application?
 - c. Do we have two level of acceptance?
 - d. Can applications be deem pending?
 - e. If we accept the application is it really starting a 6 month time window?
 - f. What happen if we accept an application and another project that is complete applies?
 - g. What do we do with active applications and use of fiscal year funds after June 30th?
 - h. What is the 6 months window for in the policy? How is the commission interpreting this?
 - i. Use of active applications in grant administration.
 - j. Can Grant funds be place in rolling account that the City funds \$10,000.00 annually? Similar to the GU HVCA rebate program.
 - k. Advised to not obligate funds on projects that aren't complete. (What language should we use moving forward?)
 - l. Should there be a deadline on application submissions?
 - m. Commission will reevaluate active applications in June.
 - n. Should language be added on EDC actions leading up to the close of the fiscal year?

ii. Upcoming Presentations/ Workshop

- 1. April 18th @6:30pm Planning & Zoning Commission
 - a. PZC continues to discuss zoning regulation changes.
 - i. The Commission is currently looking at the General Commercial Zone. Developers have shown interest in mixed – use development in the area.



- ii. This review is being compared to the 2019 Plan of Conservation & Development.
 - iii. PZC is also assess the classification of allowed business uses in the City of Groton and creating a more business friendly business environmental and ease of establishing a business in the City.
 - iv. Alpha Auto on Bridge Street is the most recent example of a business that had to hire an attorney to get a change of use from an auto retail store to an auto protective coating facility. The EDC awarded Alpha Auto a Business Soft cost grant towards their legal fees.
- 2. April 24th @ 6:00pm Committee of the Whole Presentation ~ FY24 Budget
 - a. Budget request includes a \$10,000.00 line item for the Economic Development Grant Programs
 - 3. May 8th @ 6:00pm Committee of the Whole Presentation ~ ARPA Small Business Grant Program w/ Women's Business Development Council
 - a. Staff in partnership with Women's Business Development Council is pitching a Small Business Grant Program (\$100,000.00) using ARPA funding. The program will provide business grants from \$2500.00-\$10,000.00 for business growth/ expansion plans. WBDC will administer the funds and provide technical assistance to each business participant.
- iii. Project Status Update
 - 1. Community Resilience Plan
 - a. Under Administrative Review
 - i. Recommendation includes 7 objective with associated toolbox to address a resilience challenges with identified task to move forward
 - ii. Administration is assessing staff capacity to move task forward and potential organization the City could partner with.
 - 2. Bridge Street Gateway Improvements & Complete Street Planning
 - a. City of Groton received an Active Transportation Grant to assess the Bridge Street gateway for a Complete street design
 - b. Concept plans can be view in the hall; plans are currently under staff and administrative review for a 2023 tactical urbanism demonstration project.
 - c. This is a new project and planning process for the City of Groton.
 - d. Pilot for tactician Urbanism in the City
 - 3. Strategic Communication



- a. The professional Brandt and the Tagline Groton City: History in the Making are actively being shared. The soft launch of the brand will take place from now until City Day August 4th 2023.
- b. Banner upgrades on Bridge Street will be an initial implementation
- iv. TIF
 - 1. A number of parties have shown interest in using this incentive
 - 2. TIF Administration and Policy is under staff review
- v. Report on Projects in the City
 - 1. 120 West Street ~ former Coronel Ledger School Commission to accept application for a multifamily development
 - 2. 158 Bridge Street ~ Site review to allow an auto repair business in vacant commercial space
- vi. Communications ~ None

VII. Additions to Agenda

- a. Business programming
 - i. Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies

VIII. Public Comments ~ None

IX. Adjournment

Margaret Hirsch moved to adjourn meeting
Cameron James seconded
Meeting adjourned at 6:44pm

Submitted by: Cierra Patrick