



**City of Groton**  
295 Meridian St.  
Groton, Connecticut 06340  
860.446.4103

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION & TIF ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**  
October 2, 2019  
5:30PM - 7:00PM

### **Agenda:**

#### **❖ Call to Order**

- Meeting called to order at 5:37pm
- Attendance:
  - Commissioners: Cheryl Auerbach (Chairman), Annemarie Seifert, Shelby Carlson, and Miles Dull
  - Liaisons: Tina Daniels and Jamal Beckford
  - Staff: Cierra Patrick

#### **❖ Introduction**

- Welcomed new Commissioners Jason Rusk and Margret Hirsch

#### **❖ Minutes Approval**

#### **❖ New Business**

#### **❖ Old Business**

- Staff Report
  - TIF- made effective September 30, 2019, EDC will work with City Staff to promote this tool and identify projects to fund.
  - Business Incentive Program- Soft Cost Grant- Staff informed commissioners of the programs lack of qualified applications thus far. Concerns include:
    - Is the grant too restrictive?
    - Is funding up to \$1000 (pre commercial property) in soft cost the best use of funds in the City's current economic cycle?

Staff proposed to reevaluate the program and consider changing the grant to incentivize a signage program rather than soft cost, at this time. The "Welcome to the City" initiative seeks to identify a wayfinding program

throughout the City of Groton. The establishment of a signage program would build off the wayfinding program and provide businesses an incentive to replace storefront signs. The assumption being that the replacements of storefront signs could add to the City's sense of places (aesthetics), while also allowing for increased participation. The current program funds approx. five businesses pre year, a signage program on the other hand could lower the awarded cost to say up to \$500 allowing more businesses (up to 10) to take advantage of the grant.

Commissioners Questions/ Feedback:

- Rather than change the grant program add signage cost to the list of eligible cost. Inquire whether this would be appropriate.
- What is the interpretation of the programs eligible cost?
- Improve marketing of grant program.
- Make improvements to the application.
- Commissioners agreed to reevaluate the grant program and work with staff to identify a solution. The goal is to discover how the City's grant program can better address a business need while also complimenting City initiatives, projects and/or activities.
- Business Outreach- staff provided an overview of the City's Business Visitation program that began early this year. Staff noted the progress of initial meetings but also scheduling conflicts as program entered the spring and summer seasons, when local businesses become busy. Staff will reschedule with businesses as we enter the fall and winter seasons.
- Community Participation- Public Workshop Planning- Staff encourages the commission to begin brainstorming ideas to engage the community on initiatives, projects, and/or activities that affect economic development and the business community. The EDC's objective is to host a series of events beginning in 2020 to engage and educate on economic and community development. Commissioners agreed that the City needs more boots on the ground events in addition to City Council and Commission meetings, press releases, and City website postings.
- Questioned raised by commissioners:
  - Can commissioners gain access to CEDAS resources?
  - Is the City doing anything concerning electric charging stations?

❖ **Public Comments**

❖ **Adjournment**

Cheryl Auerbach moved to adjourn  
Annemarie Seifert seconded the motion  
The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM

Submitted By Cierra Patrick