



Wednesday, December 6th 2023 | 5:30 PM

Minutes

Chairman Nishant Sahoo, Secretary Matthew Longino, Commissioner Margaret Hirsch, Commissioner Jason Rusk, Commissioner Cameron James, Commissioner Fallyn Fonville-Smith, Councilor Paul Norris, Groton Utilities Business Development Manager Aaron Brooks, and Economic Development Manager Cierra Patrick

I. ROLL CALL~ 5:34pm

- a. Commissioners: Nishant Sahoo, Fallyn Fonville-Smith, Jason Rusk, Cameron James, Margaret Hirsch
- b. Staff: Cierra Patrick

II. INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Motion to approve minutes of October 4th 2023
 - i. Motion made by Nishant Sahoo
 - ii. Seconded by Jason Rusk
 - iii. Decision 4-0-0
- b. Draft something that states there was no quorum for November 1st 2023

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS ~ 3 MINUTES PER PERSON

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. 2024 Meeting Schedule and Proposed Topics
 - i. Staff shared a calendar of the EDC's 2024 meeting dates, proposed cancellations, and various activities/ topics the commission has previously shown interest in moving forward.
 - ii. Next Meeting is February 7th 2024 we'll have a training on the BluDot Platform
 - iii. Example activities and topics included:
 1. Program Ideas: National Small Business Week, Thames River Heritage Foundation fundraising Cruises, Ribbon Cuttings, Brew Run, etc.
 2. CT Main Street Follow-up to review revitalization assessment.
 3. American Rescue Plan Small Business Funding Program



VI. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Business Outreach Update
 - i. Moving forward Staff would like to spend more time on Business Outreach and hearing from Commissioners.
 - ii. Nishant has been working mostly on the Ribbon Cutting Celebration Outreach and Coordination. Businesses include Twisted Misty, Angelique Aesthetics, Ally on Thames, and Outer Light.
 - iii. Cierra has been working with various businesses on the Minor Façade Improvements grants.
 - Angelic Aesthetics recently won an award from the Women’s Business Development Council (WBDC) for equipment. During her time with WBDC, she was able to connect with a hair stylist who she is now partnering with to promote the business. She counties to make improvements to her facilities.
 - iv. Margaret noted that Friendly Thia Restaurant has changed hands. Commissioners are encouraged to add notes to the Bludot Platform when new ownership takes place. Staff request that when updating profile information, not delete previous owner information but to add an additional contact and note the change in ownership.
- b. EDC Ordinance Revision Update
 - i. Staff is currently awaiting waiting an initial approval form City Council
- c. EDC Bylaws Revisions
 - i. A vote on the revised bylaws is awaiting ordinance approval by City Council
 - ii. Bylaws do not need to go before City Council for a vote.
- d. Economic Development Grant Program Policy & Procedures Revisions
 - i. Staff to add timeline.
 - ii. Discussion of the 6-month timeline that projects can be considered for reimbursement.
- e. Programming:
 - i. Ribbon Cutting Celebration Update
 - Event is tentatively scheduled for December 14th from 5:00-7:00pm.
 - Businesses confirmed include Twisted Misty and Ally on Thames. Awaiting confirmation from Angelique Aesthetics and Outer Light.



- We plan on visiting each business for 20 minutes and wrap up with a casual networking event.
 - Commission is flexible to move event to December 21st and January if necessary.
- f. Community Engagements:
- i. December 12th at 6:30pm Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing on the GCR Zoning Amendment
 - 1. Request form City Planner for the Commissions participation in Public Hearing. Comments can be provided via email prior to the meeting or during the meeting.
 - 2. Amendments aims to increase density in the focus area. Bridge Street and the northern portion of Thames Street to Broad Street. Discussion and concerns of building heights, and appropriateness of scale.
 - 3. Brings parking minimum requires up to date with State laws.
 - 4. Broader interpretation of business use classifications
 - ii. December 14th from 5:00-7:00pm Business Stroll/ Networking
- g. Staff Report:
- i. Economic Development Grant Program Submissions
 - 1. Barking Pumpkins LLC.
 - a. Project is approaching it's 6-month consideration window for reimbursement. All the siding work is complete. However, the project has not received a final inspection or certificate of approval from the Building & Zoning Department because their awaiting a meter replacement to be installed so the siding contractor can finish and thus received a final inspection.
 - b. When does their 6 month window start?
 - i. Is it based on the receipts of work paid; when the work is completed; or when the building permits certificate of approval is complete?
 - ii. Note that this application was submitted within 6 months of the start of work.
 - iii. Commission agrees that Staff has to receive the application within 6 months of work being completed.



- iv. In this case, the project is much bigger than the Façade. The Façade just happened to be done first and at this time the project is not complete.
- v. Commission will continue to encourage businesses to connect with staff on their interest in applying for the grant program as soon as they have project plans.
- c. Can Building & Zoning inspect the finished portion of the project and have a contingency?
 - i. Building & Zoning staff will only conduct a final inspection upon completion of work included in the building permit.
 - ii. Commission agrees to await Building & Zoning's final inspection and certificate of approval.
- 2. Angelique Aesthetics
 - a. Business owner came to staff in March prior to starting any work with an interest in doing a new sign, windows, landscaping, and mini split.
 - b. Sign was completed in June. She was unable to take advantage of Groton Utilities program and had the pay for the mini split out of pocket and thus, held off on replacing the windows and addressing landscaping.
 - c. Commission encourages applicant to complete one application for the new sign and then submit another application for the remaining façade work.

VII. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

- a. Jason Rusk Resigned from the Commission
- b. New City of Groton Website
 - i. Note from commission of dead website when searching specific in google.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Nishant Sahoo moved to adjourn meeting.
- b. Cameron James seconded.
- c. Meeting adjourned at 6:27pm

Submitted by: Cierra Patrick