



City of Groton

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Groton, Connecticut 06340
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION & TIF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 13, 2021

5:30PM - 7:00PM

Agenda:

- I. **Meeting Called to Order @ 5:32pm**
 - a) Present: Jason Rusk (Chairman), Cheryl Auerbach, Margaret Hirsch, Annemarie Seifert, Nishant Sahoo, and Paul Norris
 - b) Liaison: Stephen Sheffield
 - c) Staff: Cierra Patrick
- II. **Introduction**
 - a) Staff introduced and welcomed Stephen “Steven” Sheffield to the Commission serving as the liaison for City Council.
 - b) Steven provided a brief background and spoke to his interested in what can be done economically in the City and the community development of Thames Street and Five Corners and ability to being involved.
- III. **Minutes Approval**
 - a) November 4, 2020
Motion to accept the minutes of November 4th, 2020
Motion: Cheryl Auerbach
Second: Margaret Hirsch
Decision: 6-0-0
- IV. **New Business**
 - a) Town of Groton and City of Groton Economic Development Commission Liaison

- Staff mentioned that the Town of Groton Economic Development Commission is interested in liaisons serving on each commission. Commissioners discussed a networking event, held some years back as a joint effort. Upon reflection, commissioners highlighted the need for a more focused and task oriented approach to collaborative projects and/or events. Commission agrees that staff should schedule a meeting with Town of Groton Economic Development Commission Chairman and staff to better gage the role of liaisons; information sharing vs. potential collaborative projects and/or events.

V. Old Business

a) EDC Working Groups

- Staff recommends Working Groups meet on Wednesdays. The 1st Wednesday of the month being reserved for the EDC's regular monthly meeting. Staff is flexible with either day or night meetings times and encourages commissioners to coordinate among one another to identify ideal times.
- Staff invited commissioners to join the January 25th Committee of the Whole meeting where she will be providing City Council a Department overview of projects, how they relate to one another, and next steps.

b) Staff Report

i. Project Status Updates:

i. Pedestrian & Bicycle Network Assessment

- Staff is coordinating with internal staff to identify best planning processes and potential partners as well as researching Complete Streets.
- In 2021 the Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Working Group will assist staff with assessing network priority routes with a series of mapping exercises gaged to identify existing conditions and needed improvements.

ii. Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation

- Malone and MacBroom and staff are awaiting the approval of a QAPP to move forward with data collection for the Community Resiliency Plan. In the meantime, Staff is conducting assessments of potential projects recommended in the 2019 Community Resiliency Workshop and the 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

iii. Strategic Communications

- Staff is working with Miranda Creative on the City's First digital newsletter, the development of a City email database to stay connected to residents and businesses, and a digital audit of internal and external information on the City of Groton.

iv. Thames View Park Improvements

- Planning and Economic Development have been asked to collaborate with Parks and Rec on Thames View Park parcel planning, connections to neighboring open space and future activities.
- v. Visioning Thames Center
 - On January 4th City Council accepted the 2020 Preservation CT Vibrant Communities award in the amount of \$25,000. Funding will be utilized to conduct a series of Visioning Exercises to reprogram and repurpose underutilized space along Thames Street between Broad Street and Baker Avenue. Staff is finalizing the Scope of Work for consultant services. The Thames Center Planning and Programming Working Groups will assisting with this effort.
- ii. Tax Increment Financing District
 - i. All Working Group projects and EDC recommendations will be incorporated into the TIF Districts Master Plan. 2021 focus is Thames Center and Community Outreach and Engagement.
- iii. Projects in the City
 - i. Staff reports that Electric Boat is making good progress on their Campus Redevelopment.
 - ii. There are two potential projects under the Multiuse Design District. This newly adopted regulation grants a developer more design flexibility. Developer would provide regulations for site specific design guidelines that enable the developer to give more attention to creating a sense of place versus a development that's building oriented. Developers are required to submit a site master plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission.
 - Commissioners requested additional information on the Multiuse Design District regulation
 - iii. 150 Bridge Street has a zoning text amendment going before P&Z for an automotive paint protection business.
 - iv. West Side School Development is making good progress and is on track for their 2021 summer completion
 - v. Groton Utilities is conducting a number of safety and resiliency improvements throughout the City

VI. Questions & Comments

- a) Commissioners inquired about the Poquonnock Road re-pavement project. Staff provided that the project is schedule to break ground summer 2021.
- b) Commissioners inquired on business impacts and outreach during COVID and whether there were any business closures in the City. Staff reported that current outreach efforts are conducted via phone and email and mentioned the lack of updated contact information. The Strategic Communication projects seeks to update contact information while improving communication platforms. In the meantime, staff recommends Commissions encourage business owners to reach out to her and share her contact information.

- c) Commissioners inquired on the Business Spotlight Videos. Staff has had to postpone video production due to COVID and is looking to begin filming in spring when the weather permits for outdoor filming. In the meantime staff is working to update the business contact list.
- d) Commissioners inquired on the outcome of the indoor Farmers Market. Chairman provided feedback, having attended all thus far, that the events are well attended and participating businesses are often sold out of products and looking forward to future events.

VII. Adjournment

Jason Rusk moved to adjourn

Annmarie Seifert seconded the motion

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 PM

Submitted by Cierra Patrick