



TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
Economic & Community Development Department
2750 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06518

Dale Kroop, Director

Minutes: The Economic Development Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Sachetti, Mr. Diaz, Mr. DelGrego, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Moses, Mr. DeNicola, Mr. Rolnick

Commissioners Excused: Ms. Giannini, Ms. Gretencord, Mr. Inzero

Others in Attendance: Economic & Community Development Director Dale Kroop, Commission Clerk Gerry Tobin

1. Call to order

Mr. Sachetti called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

2. Reading and Approval of minutes of the Meeting of October 8, 2013

Mr. DelGrego made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2013 meeting. Mr. Zambrano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Report of the Director

Stop & Shop - Mr. Kroop sent a detailed email to the Commissioners. He said after the announcement about Stop & Shop closing their Putnam/Dixwell store, the Town received very few calls. We can do certain things to assist employees etc. Mr. Kroop contacted other tenants of the shopping center, and will meet with them about their future plans. He talked to the asset manager of Putnam Place. Rumors abound. Everyone wants Stew Leonard's to come to Hamden, but they look at the statistics. The median income of the population in that area of Hamden is \$38,000. The median income town wide is in the low \$60,000's. Their job is to eliminate areas where they would not locate, and they won't come to Putnam Place. Mr. Kroop has kept everyone informed. Mr. DelGrego mentioned zipscan.com and pew.com research groups.

Mr. Kroop distributed the financial report and noted that Page 2 should show \$13,000 encumbered due to the additional \$5,000 approved for Burt Processing \$121,640 available for incentive programs. The loan statement came in from the servicer, and we have now accounts receivable of \$90,943.01. Lenox Builders now current with their payments. Our town attorney is in touch with Clean Gear's attorney about the possibility of them paying off the small loan, then working to get the large loan paid. Mr. Sachetti said we have to determine what we have for collateral. We must have collateral – real estate, equipment. Mr. Zambrano said we do, he believes we have a first mortgage

on the condo at Sherman Avenue. We will consider our strategy to get the loan paid. The owner doesn't work full time at his business. Mr. Sachetti asked what Mr. Kroop thinks we will know next month that we don't know now. Mr. Kroop said they will have paid half of the small loan and then the balance of that loan. Mr. Kroop will run ideas by the committee, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Moses and Mr. Sachetti. Mr. Kroop clarified Lenox Builders payment for Mr. DelGrego.

Mr. Kroop said we have two new links on the web site for the energy program and job training. Press releases have been sent out. There is an icon on the site that goes to the press release. The Town will put an icon on their site that will look like a light bulb.

Mr. Kroop said a newsletter is almost finished and will be ready for distribution within the week through email. When asked how often he does newsletters, Mr. Kroop replied that he does it when he can, but he does email blasts of news and blurbs as things come up.

Mr. Kroop is trying to figure out a way to get Mr. McDonagh's health care information on the web site. Mr. Zambrano was disappointed with the attendance at Mr. McDonagh's presentation.

Mr. Kroop is coming up with a schedule of speakers for 2014. He will get a press release out regarding our speakers. He has someone for Human Resources Benefits, Digital Marketing and Benefits, possibly for February, March and April.

Mr. Kroop has scheduled two cluster meetings – one a week from tomorrow for the workforce cluster meeting. All agencies have received email/mail. They will talk about an agenda for workforce development for 2014. On Tuesday, December 3, 2013 there will be a real estate cluster meeting. Commissioners are welcome to attend. The cluster meetings are held from 9:00 a.m. To 10:30 a.m. The real estate cluster meetings are usually well attended. Mr. Kroop reminds them constantly about the meetings. He will plan more clusters after the holidays.

Mr. Kroop distributed an article about the Latino demographic shift and how they are affecting business around the country.

Mr. Kroop did a presentation at the Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce today and sent around information.

Development around town.

AAA grand opening is this Friday, 11/15. The Centerville Lumber property has been approved for a three story hotel with mixed use in front and the original lumber building will be renovated. Also on Whitney Avenue, the Harstan Building has been taken over by Rockville Bank. Eli's has put on an addition, and another bank is being built on the site north of the Post Office.

Mather Street is going to be a 10,000 square foot retail building with a retail strip center behind it, and behind that 290 one bedroom apartments. There are things going on everywhere. A new meat market is opening in town by the son of the owner of Ye Olde Butcher Shop.

The Skiff Street site will probably become residential. There was discussion on the dangerous intersection with Partyka Chevrolet and Hamden Hall's driveway.

A restaurant is looking at the vacant Hamden Chrysler Plymouth site. It will draw thousands of people Mr. Kroop is working with the developer and the State DOT to put another light there, realigning the light at the high school to restaurant driveway. Mr. Kroop is convening the parties. These are data driven DOT analysis. They need to get the Board of Education involved. The SBC property is under contract and the land on Putnam is under contract. There will be an \$8,000,000 investment in the two properties.

All of these sites were vacant and now have all garnered interest. There are not that many vacant properties in Hamden. Mr. Kroop will work with P&Z on lots with split zoning.

Middle School – the party Mr. Kroop was working with has dropped out of the running and have signed a letter of intent somewhere else. This would not have been a tax paying entity. They will do another article on the findings of the inside of the building, which were good, and will then do another RFP.

The Council is voting tonight to sell the former community center to the Economic Development Corporation. The State Historic Commission has approved the building for their register. Hopefully this will be approved tonight and the building will provide incubator space for small businesses.

Mr. Moses asked if Mr. Kroop has been getting any optimistic viewpoints on the incubator site – how many businesses does he think will move in there. Mr. Kroop feels 20 businesses could go in there. There has been a lot of interest. The classrooms are 6-700 square feet. If it gets approved, we take possession in early December, start construction in the spring of 2014, perhaps opening in early winter of 2015. This will be a gut rehab. There would be some incentives for the historic accoutrements. Mr. Moses said some of these small businesses will be able to utilize the services of the Corporation. Mr. Kroop said the goal will be for the Business Assistance Center to have a presence at the facility for a certain number of hours per month to mentor the small businesses, check their books, hold workshops, etc. This is similar to Science Park 30 years ago. Southern, Albertus, Quinnipiac and others are interested in the incubator space. The hope is that students who graduate from our local colleges will open their businesses here. State grant money will be used, and some funds will come from the Historic Commission. The state has certain requirements. Mr. Kroop has talked to the assessor, and because we are a non-profit we don't pay taxes on the property until we are collecting rent, then we prorate the taxes based on the money you collect and the square footage. There will be a deed restriction requiring the building be an incubator for 10 years to October of 2023. The state has to approve all of the leases. The idea is to keep the rents low so the businesses can grow and move into larger space. We will provide heat, but not electricity. There will be common bathrooms. We will use our incentive program and will have Richard Pearce there. Mr. Zambrano said Erector Square was another success.

Mr. Kroop told the Chamber today about recruiting businesses from North Haven. Taylor Freezer was formerly on Universal Drive and has now subleased space to another business from Sackett Point road.

Mr. Kroop contacted Constant Contact which provides free services. He paid for the addresses so we can blast daily. He did a 10 question survey trying to determine how many business owners own houses in Hamden, and pay taxes on buildings, the personal property of the business, taxes on houses and cars. He only got about 5% responding out of the 600 he sent out. These surveys don't cost anything.

Mr. Sachetti asked about the Business Assistance Center at the Library that we discussed at the last meeting. Mr. Kroop said the Library Director emailed him last week. They cleaned out the area removing everything that was not business related, and will bring all of the books etc. that were mixed in throughout the library to the location. Mr. Kroop will get an inventory and have Mr. Pearce look at it. The workforce will be tied in, and they will tie in the computers that are located there for some job research, etc.

4. Old Business:

5. New Business:

Review of 2014 Meeting Schedule

The schedule is for the 2nd Tuesday of every month, except for November, when it is scheduled for the 3rd Tuesday because of the Veterans Day holiday.

Mr. DelGrego made a motion to approve the 2014 meeting schedule for the Economic Development Commission. Mr. DeNicola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

6. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Zambrano made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DelGrego seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

Tel (203) 287-7033

Fax (203) 287-7035

e-mail: dkroop@hamden.com