



**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, January 13, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Diaz, Mr. Del Grego, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Moses, Mr. Rolnick, Mr. Good, Mr. Sachetti, Mr. Rodriguez, Ms. Sacco, Mr. DeNicola

Commissioners Excused: Ms. Gretencord

1. Call to order – 5:30

Mr. Sachetti called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Review Minutes of December 9, 2014

**Mr. Moses made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Zambrano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

3. Report of the Director

Mr. Kroop reviewed the financial information. As of the first of the year, Lenix is two months behind, but they will catch up. Everyone else is fine. There is currently \$419,897.90 available with accounts receivable as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of \$45,271.82. After tonight's vote we will have additional encumbrances. Some projects have been completed, but in some instances businesses ended up not spending enough money so the loan did not have to be paid out.

Mr. Zambrano asked what is included in the Adjustments column. Mr. Kroop replied Adjustments includes loans that are currently being paid. Once the money is deposited it gets transferred into the micro loan kitty.

Regarding the Plan, the extension 6/30/15 was approved by the Legislative Council, and at that time we will present a three year plan. It cost \$7,000 to post the legal notice because the entire Ordinance had to be posted. Mr. Kroop now has to change all promotional materials, the web site, etc., to reflect all of the changes and he will do that over the next couple of weeks.

His office is finally moving along. The staff position has been upgraded. There were seven applicants for the position. Four were deemed eligible and of those, two didn't pass and two did pass. Civil service meets next week, and once they approve the two candidates Mr. Kroop will be able to choose. The candidates had to answer a series of five questions regarding customer service, knowledge of the program, etc.

Mr. Kroop had one intern from SCSU who finished before the holidays, and he is interviewing another one. Mr. Kroop is open to talking to interested students. He will have a Quinnipiac public service fellow for the summer. Interns are needed to assist with the data collection.

Mr. Sachetti asked if the Town has a grant writer. Mr. Kroop said the Mayor's Office has someone handling small grants, but he does his own. Mr. Kroop recommended the Town put a grant writer in the budget.

Mr. Kroop is requesting 100% of his salary in his budget again, and probably 50% will be cut out. His contract was extended to 2016. The hope is that the department can cover the shortage through grants. In this fiscal year he would only be able to cover half of the shortage, but he has been able to cover it in previous years.

The programs will be evaluated, and he will get the committees going once he has the data available. He will respond to emails if commissioners have anything particular they want to ask him.

Mr. Kroop said the Town is going for \$110,000,000 in pension obligation bonds and will be meeting with three rating companies. Mr. Kroop has done about 15 presentations on these bond ratings in NY and Boston.

Mr. Kroop is planning several meetings with different groups of people including the Association of Civic Associations. Several of the civic associations have invited him to speak before them, and he has agreed to talk about economic development and our incentive plans. Scheduled meetings are Spring Glen Civic Association on February 4<sup>th</sup>; Westwoods Civic Association on February 9<sup>th</sup> and on March 12<sup>th</sup> Whitneyville Civic Association. He went to a meeting of the Whitneyville Association to talk about the remediation of the parks. That is a large active group. The 5<sup>th</sup> district includes Newhall, Whitneyville, Mather Street, etc. Mr. Kroop said our success depends a great deal on good dialog with the neighborhood. Mr. Kroop would like to rebuild the State Street and Highwood neighborhood associations. He will meet with the Mayor about these issues.

Mr. Kroop would like to have a couple of speakers attend our meeting to talk about what they think the Hamden market is like, probably Realtors. Mr. Sachetti said it is difficult to get the public to come out. Mr. Kroop feels this is important for the commissioners, and he might invite P&Z commission members. Mr. Rodriquez mentioned the public perceptions of Hamden that were discussed at an earlier meeting. Mr. Kroop said this is an issue that comes up. There was further discussion. Mr. Moses said marketing is the only thing that can change the perception. Mr. Good wondered how does the perception people have of Hamden compare to people's perception of their own towns, like North Haven, Wallingford, etc. Mr. Kroop said his focus would be to talk about our programs. Does it help to offer a tax abatement? Mr. DelGREGO said the taxes are even more important. Mr. Kroop reminded everyone that this is an election year. Commissioners gave Mr. Kroop permission to invite local brokers as discussed. Mr. Kroop mentioned he would welcome suggestions for other speakers. Mr. Sachetti felt the Police Chief might not be a bad idea. Mr. Rolnick suggested complaints should be more specific, don't just say zoning or traffic, or make other general complaints.

4. Old Businesses

5. New Businesses

Mr. Sachetti brought up the business incentive recommendation for Precision Grinding Solutions, LLC, which is looking at relocating to Corporate Drive. Mr. Kroop said there aren't many occasions that we can talk to a manufacturer about Hamden. The owner of this business was looking at Seymour and Oxford. Seymour offered the maximum that can be offered through the state program. We have an advantage because we can offer grants and permit waivers. The business is currently located in Wallingford. This company would bring a few good manufacturing jobs. Mr. Zambrano asked if he was applying for a 504 loan. Mr. Kroop said he is working with cash and TD Bank. Our own program offers less than what the State offers. The State pays a percentage of the taxes abated back to the town. The State offers an 80% abatement and gives back 40%. Seymour doesn't have their own program, so they got the State to give the incentive. Mr. Kroop went to the State and they agreed to do the same deal in Hamden. We approve this and then the State offers its own benefits. Seymour cannot offer the grant or the permit waivers. Precision Grinding is in contract and doing their due diligence. While this is not a done deal, it is moving along. They will be hiring up to 5 people over the next few years. They are also considering a \$1 million equipment purchase.

Mr. Sachetti has done a little research on the company and the person and he is very impressed with what the owner has done to assure the business is viable for the long term. The improvements would be approximately \$200,000 and the equipment taxation varies. Mr. Sachetti asked for a motion as presented

**Mr. DelGrego made a motion to approve the following benefits on behalf of Precision Grinding Solutions LLC: Tax deferral on real and personal property for a maximum of 50% for three years; Property Improvement Grant in the amount of \$10,000; Building permit waiver of 50% excluding plumbing, electric and HVAC. Mr. Moses seconded the motion.** The vote was unanimous in favor. / Carl Porto III is their attorney.

#### 6. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

There was mention of the edible fruit business across from the post office which is now closed. Mr. Kroop reported that the business incubator starts construction in March or April. The RWA will be doing the remediation of the land. Once the Mayor gives a go ahead, there will be a presentation by the developer for the old Middle School. Rochford Field and Villano Park are under remediation.

We do not have a lot of real estate available. Real estate development, state, region and country wide, is hot right now. The Tagliatellas purchased the Fluids Control site and will eventually build apartments there. We will see a lot of housing development which attracts pedestrians. 77 units have been approved at Mather Street. We will see a conversation about do we or don't we need more housing. He feels P&Z will approve a lot of these projects. Obviously the self storage business is doing well. There is nothing going on on the Putnam Avenue facility right now, the the facility on the old SBC site is moving along and starting to look better.

On Putnam Avenue across from the self storage facility in what used to be the old Amphenol Spectra Strip building 41 units of housing are being developed. Skiff Street rentals will be a higher market, Mather and Putnam will consist of a lot of one bedroom units renting for about \$1,000 per month. Nothing prevents students from living in any of the housing units. The development on Mather is a not for profit development for people with physical disabilities, i.e. cerebral palsy, etc. The development on Sanford Street will be tax exempt. Skiff Street will be fully taxable. Hamden is 800 units short of the 10% requirement for affordable housing. It will be difficult to reach that goal.

Mr. Kroop said there will be more news coming next month on some of our worst properties. He has another manufacturer, but he is looking here and elsewhere at buildings. Mr. Sachetti wondered about the businesses Mr. Kroop talked to at the trade show. Mr. Kroop said he has many business cards and this is one reason he wants input from the brokers. Most site selectors work to eliminate towns, not to find towns. He can't direct business development to northern Hamden because there are no sewers there. Quinnipiac did some work at the Westwoods intersection, which created the capacity to go north with the sewers. There is a sewer line behind Trailside Village but it only serves that development. South of the parkway, between the Operating Engineers building and Putnam Avenue is where the larger parcels are. He would suggest a walking tour in the spring.

Mr. Zambrano asked what is going on with where Dr. Hochberg's office is. Mr. Kroop is not sure.

The package store in Spring Glen is proposing a move across the street to the vacant gas station.

The Stop & Shop/Putnam Place property is going into foreclosure, but he is not sure who is bringing the action.

Ms. Sacco asked about the Toys R Us location. Mr. Kroop said they hold the lease until 2016/17, and sometimes use it for overflow inventory or rent space for the Halloween Store, etc.

Centerville Lumber – the old plan is now dead, but there could be a new player.

Auto Zone is still a reality next to Bed Bath and Beyond.

There was discussion the Mauro Motors. Commissioners wondered why they are still holding on to this property. Mr. Kroop said he isn't that anxious to sell it unless someone offered him a lot of money. He has had offers. Mr. Mauro wants to lease not sell. Mr. Kroop said the success of development south of the Parkway is totally dependent on people living there. The economy in that area has to improve.

Mr. Zambrano asked about Eli's, which was closed for a few days for renovations to the bar area.

The proposed hotel on Sherman Avenue is a dead project. The approval is now over five years old. The property consists of 20+ acres, but only two are buildable.

The Clarion Hotel has been sold. It will remain a Clarion and the new owner will upgrade it. The diner is part of the transaction. The operator of the diner leases the building from the owner.

7. Adjournment

**Mr. Zambrano made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DelGrego seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

**Tel (203) 287-7033**

**Fax (203) 287-7035**

**e-mail: [dkroop@hamden.com](mailto:dkroop@hamden.com)**