



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, December 8, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Sachetti, Ms. Gretencord, Ms. Sacco, Mr. Diaz, Mr. DeNicola, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Moses

Commissioners Absent: Mr. Good, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Rolnick, Mr. Rodriguez

Others in Attendance: Ms. Traester and Ms. Civitello of the Westwoods Civic Association, Dave – Interested Citizen, Mr. Kroop, Director of Economic & Community Development, Ms. Regan of the Economic Development Office, Ms. Tobin, Commission Clerk

1. Call to Order

Mr. Sachetti called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

2. Review Minutes of October 13, 2015

Mr. Zambrano made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2015 meeting. Ms. Gretencord seconded the motion. The vote was eight in favor, Mr. Moses abstained.

3. Report of the Director

4. New Businesses

Business Incentives: Utility Communications, Inc.

Utility Communications currently owns and occupies an 8,000 square foot building at 920 Sherman Avenue and plans to build a new 25,000 square foot building on two vacant lots, adding 15 jobs over the next three years to their current 40 employees. The Tax Incentive Committee has recommended a tax abatement of 50% for three consecutive years, which might be replaced with Urban Jobs Program benefits if the company is eligible. They have also recommended a grant in the amount of \$3,000. No permit waiver was approved.

Ms. Gretencord made a motion to approve a tax abatement of 50% and a grant in the amount of \$3,000 for Utility Communications, Inc.. Mr. Zambrano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Three Brothers Diner, 1038 Dixwell Avenue

Mr. Kroop mentioned that the Three Brothers Diner application was approved by the Tax Incentive Committee yesterday. Since taking over the Colonial Diner in 2000, the Three Brothers Diner has become the heart of the neighborhood. They plan to build an outdoor enclosed patio, a lighted parking lot and renovate the interior and exterior of the building. Mr. Moses asked what is the value of what we give them. Mr. Kroop responded that the value won't be known until the project is complete and the property is reassessed. Mr. Kroop referred to the Best Video building. The owner put in over \$400,000 in improvements, but changed the configuration of tenants from five to two adding only \$20,000 to the value. Mr. Diaz mentioned that they did a great job on their business plan. Mr. Kroop mentioned that Mr. Leng is planning new initiatives probably in Highwood. There was discussion on the NRZ designation and the availability of grant funds. The Tax Incentive Committee recommended a tax abatement of 50% for three consecutive years, a grant in the amount of \$2,000, and a Building Permit Waiver of 100% for Three Brothers Diner.

Mr. Moses made a motion to approve a tax abatement of 50% for three consecutive years, a Property Improvement Grant in the amount of \$2,000 and a Building Permit Waiver of 100% for Three Brothers Diner. Ms. Gretencord seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

6. New Business

Mr. Kroop announced that Mayor Leng has decided not to reappoint Town Planner Leslie Creane and Town Engineer Bob Brinton. Mr. Kops will be temporarily in charge of the Planning Office and Mr. Fuller will be temporarily in charge of the Engineering Department.

The International Trade Show was held at the Javitz Center in New York from Sunday night through today. Mr. Kroop attended and said there were approximately 10,000 attendees. This is a very elaborate show and included the top developers in the world. Mr. Kroop attends these events to get face time with developers. People actually write real estate deals right on the floor. He spent about 45 minutes with people from the Hamden Mart and met for a long time with the Marketplace people. He tried unsuccessfully to meet with the developer of the Putnam/Dixwell property, but did talk to their vice president who said he would get back to him in a couple of days. There is a store called Fallas Paredes, a Walmart type store that will be going in to the Putnam/Dixwell location soon.

- Mr. Kroop said he is trying to get developers for the east side of Dixwell Avenue south of the parkway.
- He also said that we are getting pretty close to a resolution on the Toys R Us situation. Their lease expires in 2017, which is like tomorrow to Kimco Realty. There are many discussions going on regarding tenants.
- Regarding the Marketplace site, Plato's Closet, a nice consignment shop is leasing in the TJMaxx remaining space in the first quarter of 2-16

Mr. Kroop mentioned that there are all kinds of discussions going on on expansions, moving changing spaces, etc. With these moves Hamden will have 100 % tenancy in the Mart and Plaza. We have to find new places for tenants to locate. Mr. Kroop said we have a limited handouts to present to developers and he will discuss that with Ms. Gretencord. REX (formerly RPG) had a table which he

manned for a period of time, and he had all the Hamden information which people took along with his cards. Some cities had mini booths and they felt they were priced fairly at \$500

5. Other new businesses :

In January at our meeting REX will speak on a comprehensive development strategy for the region. To be eligible for Economic Development Administration funding, there has to be a strategy adopted in the New Haven Region with a broad system of goals and tasks to fit our area. There was discussion on the ability to get funding. The Town pays for membership to REX based on population and we have definitely got our money's worth from this program.

An intern from SCSU , a geography major, will be joining Mr. Kroop's Office from the end of January 2016 through May. This is a 150 hour unpaid internship. We get them to do a lot of writing, creating data sheets, etc.

6. Old Businesses

Mr. Kroop mentioned that we have had Workforce, Healthcare and two Real Estate cluster meetings. We will start fresh after the first of the year with Insurance and Finance. Mr. Kroop will do a schedule. We currently send emails to a list of about 4,000 through Constant Contact for under \$300 for the year. More names can be added if commissioners wish to add any, individuals, groups, etc.

The Jazz series will follow the concert series at Town Center Park on August 6, 2016. There will be one concert per year. Blueplate started the jazz series on the Branford green. He is looking for sponsors.

Moonrocks , the cookie store, had its grand opening and is doing really well. They are located next to Ibiza.

Mr. Kroop met with the Starbucks people about having a new Starbucks in the northern part of town.

7. Project Updates

Mr. Kroop mentioned that 3139 Whitney Avenue which was previously before Planning & Zoning, is coming back to P&Z tonight, but the commission has been advised to deny the application. They have reduced the number of apartments to 65 but only provide 100 parking spaces. This is a four story proposal with no elevator and no handicap access.. There is an affordable housing proposal for some of the apartments. There might be commercial space on the first floor. Ms. Civitello and Ms. Traester spoke on this proposal. They also noted that Mr. Lahey has mentioned in two businesses on Whitney Avenue that he has visited, he wanted to put a Starbucks on northern Whitney Avenue.

Auto zone is under construction next to Bed Bath and Beyond. Advanced Auto is ahead of schedule. Behind Advanced Auto at Mather and Dixwell is approved for another building. The 495 apartments will probably start construction next spring so now there is interest in a commercial use.

The Himmel building is at 1409 Dixwell north of where Harmony Kids Day Care is located. The property is polluted and the Town is owed \$600,000 in taxes. This group also owns a building on Putnam Avenue.

New student housing regulations are on the Planning & Zoning agenda for tonight, and if approved, they will require landlords renting to students to occupy the property. Current property owners with student housing permits will be grandfathered and will not have to meet this requirement.

The Camco Property has no access except on Shepard Avenue. He has someone that might be interested, but would have to build a bridge across a stream which would be expensive.

Centerville Lumber – Mr. Kroop met with the developer. The project has been approved and they are – trying to get financing

There has been no action on the Mauro Motors Property. This would be a good opportunity because of the development on Mather Street of 77 units as well as the 395 unit project.

A broker has three houses in a row on Dixwell Avenue near the industrial park that he wants to do something with.

Mr. Kroop mentioned that the Hamden Economic Development Commission received a first place in the South Central Region award from the Connecticut Economic Resource Commission (CERC).

It was an awesome day at the dedication of Villano Park honoring Mayor Villano and his contributions to Hamden.

There has been no interest to speak of in the space next to Kohls.

Mr. Zambrano mentioned the QVHD restaurant ratings.

Review and Approval of the 2016 Economic Development Commission Meeting Schedule

Mr. DeNicola made a motion to approve the 2016 Economic Development Commission meeting schedule. Ms. Sacco seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Regarding the commission's financial report, there is \$37,000 in accounts receivable. One of the accounts is consistently 30 days late. We have about \$217,000 available to get through 2018.

Mr. DeNicola mentioned No Worries Brewery is open on State Street, near Dance Unlimited. Mr. Kroop will stop by. They were planning to do tastings and events.

Mr. Kroop said someone broke into the old Middle School and tried to steal copper. The proposal for housing at the old Middle School was rejected by P&Z, but it will come back one way or another. That night it was on the agenda there were two alternates sitting in on the commission. Ms. Civitello said there were a lot of people in attendance concerned about building apartments on contaminated soil and the issue of density. The town spends about \$200,000 per year on the building, so something will happen there.

The Incubator Space is going back out to bid after the first of the year because bids were really high.

Ms. Regan mentioned DeMils is reopening as a banquet facility.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Sachetti thanked everyone for their input, guidance and commitment to this commission for 2015,. Ms. Civitello thanked the commission for allowing her and Ms. Traester to speak at its meetings.

Mr. Diaz made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Sacco seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
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