



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 12, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. DeGrego, Mr. Diaz, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Sachetti, Mr. Good, Mr. Rodriguez, Ms. Sacco, Ms. Gretencord, Mr. Moses, Mr. DeNicola
Commissioners Absent: Mr. Rolnick

Guests: REX Presenters Ginny Koslowski, Barbara Malmberg, Karla Lindquist, Westwoods Civic Association CoChairs Gail Traester and Cindy Civitello, Interested Citizen

Others in Attendance: Director of Economic & Community Development Dale Kroop, Administrative Assistant Sharon Regan, Commission Clerk Gerry Tobin

Speakers this evening from REX Development:

Comprehensive Development Strategy for the Region

Mr. Kroop explained that the Regional Growth Partnership became REX in 2005, and is the regional economic development group to which we belong and pay percapita membership fees of approximately \$18,000. We get a lot out of it if we put ourselves into it.

Strategic Economic Development Plan:

Ms. Kozlowski is the CEO of the Economic Development Corporation of New Haven. She introduced Karla Lindquist who has been working with EDC as the project manager for contract work with City of New Haven and Barbara Malmberg, the director of Marketing for the Regional Economic Xcelleration (REX). Ms. Kozlowski said they are responsible for developing from Meriden to Madison to Milford and try to address the problems the municipalities and the region have cohesively, such as unemployment, transportation infrastructure, etc. Membership in REX allows towns and cities to receive grant money.

Ms. Kozlowski presented a snapshot of Hamden and the South Central Region. She said REX is trying to appeal to the demographic to make housing affordable. When they talk about building affordable housing in Milford, everyone goes crazy and it gets turned down. The greatest percentage of jobs in Milford are retail, and those people can't afford to live in Milford.

Business development and retention in the town they are located in presently is their goal, and if that is not possible, they try to keep them in the region. The next presentation was on Employment Clusters. There are several new technology companies in the region. The Town of Hamden is getting ready to enter into a contract with SeeClickFix whereby citizens can report issues.

Preparing the workforc for the Web Development – REX developed a boot camp with New Haven and Gateway for a certificate program in web development at a cost of \$3,500. Ms. Sacco said she works for Quinnipiac and wondered if the certificate program has been offered to current college students. The course is offered on line and in a classroom. Ms. Sacco felt the program would be of interest to many students. Students can still sign up and the program starts January 27th.

Ms. Kozlowski said this also applies to students graduating with biology degrees that aren't prepared for the bio jobs in our area. She reported that 50% of the bioscience companies in Connecticut are in New Haven County.

New London is developing new incubator space in the former Pfizer building. Science Park is completely occupied, as are some of the other incubator buildings in our area. A list of biotech companies in the greater New Haven area was presented. Ms. Kozlowski reported that Yale is the 14th highest recipient of grants from the National Institute of Health in the Country.

COG collects data on people from the suburbs working in New Haven. They report 38,000 in general, but not what sector they work in.

Consolidation is what is happening across the country which is why several companies are moving out of state.

There was discussion on Alexion of Cheshire and New Haven, acquiring several other companies which is the reason for their hiring. REX has worked with Southern Connecticut State University to work with people getting their degree in biology and STEM to develop course material. The RWA has also worked with SCSU to develop courses for public utilities.

REX has a \$750,000 budget, mostly from membership, but also grants, funds from Yale University, etc. They talk to many people that in the end do not relocate here. Mr. Kroop mentioned that Hamden doesn't really have laboratory space It costs \$500 per square foot to build. We have a low vacancy rate and the unavailability of property to develop. A former proposed biotech park planned for Hamden is now going to be 375 apartments.

Ms. Lindquist explained that some of the companys' decisions on locations are tied to deals with venture capitalists who might dictate where the company locates. Some of these companies are pushing back. Keeping a good amount of bio science companies in the area is important.

Ms. Kozlowski mentioned that it is important for constitutents and voters to keep in contact with their state representatives.

Mr. Sachetti thanked the presenters and said the commission appreciates the partnership, guidance and support of REX. Ms. Kozlowski complimented Mr. Kroop on his efforts.

1. Call to Order: 5:29

Mr. Saachetti called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m.

2. Review Minutes of December 8, 2015

Mr. Zambrano made a motion to approve the minutes of December 8, 2015. Mr. Diaz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Report of the Director

The last two pages of the hand out are the financial reports. The second to last page shows what is left of the loan portfolio. Lenox Builders in a month behind as usual. We hope there will be a refinance of the loan at some point. The other borrower pays like clockwork. We discontinued the microloan program in July. Our overall budget is currently \$221,000. The incentive for Precision Grinding in the amount of \$20,000 should be paid out by the end of the month.

4. Old Businesses

Mr. Kroop announced that he is planning cluster meetings for the commercial real estate, finance and insurance clusters. Solopreneurs will be added as a cluster. Mr. Kroop also plans to develop a retail cluster, which is currently the weakest cluster. He will work with the Hamden Chamber of Commerce to do something in neighborhoods to build our retail cluster as a small business retail cluster. Large companies are not interested. There are nine civic associations, three of which are active, Westwoods, Spring Glen and Dunbar Hill, and others that are weak, such as Highwood and State Street. He said the cluster meetings are very stimulating.

We should hear something during the first part of this year about the Toys R Us space. Mr. Kroop is not getting a lot of cooperation with the owners of Putnam Place and the new store that has opened there. Plato's Closet will be opening next to TJ Maxx during the first part of this year. That plaza will be 100% occupied as is the Plaza and the Hamden Mart is almost at 100%. The Home Depot Plaza only has one small vacancy.

Mr. Kroop is getting an intern from Southern Connecticut State University next week and he will work through June. We usually get a Quinnipiac fellow in the summer, and he will possibly get a high school student. Mr. Kroop wants to talk to Mr. Rodriguez regarding the possibility of an intern from the University of New Haven. Next week Hamden DECA is doing a Shark Tank at the Hamden High School, and he and Ms. Dudchik of the Chamber will be judging. On Wednesday, Mr. Kroop is meeting with the SCSU Business School and he is also scheduled to meet with Albertus Magnus. He is trying to make the use of interns a bigger part of what we do.

Mr. Kroop had overwhelming response from the solopreneurs. He will be meeting with them at 9:00 a.m. Next Tuesday. He has about 30 people registered. We want the people farming for business involved, but we really want to develop an agenda for the solopreneurs. There are thousands of businesses in Town that we don't even know about. Many of them will be providing jobs in the future. We all want to recruit, but retention is important.

5. New Businesses

6. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

Mr. Kroop said Advanced Auto is moving along and he will do a press release which will be sent to the press, commissioners, and 4000 people through constant comment. They are located at the corner of Mather Street and Dixwell Avenue. The apartment building to the rear of Advanced Auto will be starting in the spring, as well as the 375 apts. Auto Zone is going up quickly beside Bed Bath & Beyond. These business will open simultaneously.

Mr. Kroop is working on the Hamden Jazz Series soft jazz concert in August.

The self storage facility on Putnam Avenue is open. This was a \$4.5million investment.

Centerville Lumber- There was a large project proposed for this site, including a five story building, an office building where Centerville Lumber was located, and a hotel to the rear. This was a developer with foreign investors and they have since gone away. A local developer has now stepped into the breach and will take over the project. The current building in the front will be turned into a restaurant (everyone will be pleased), a hotel, and the former Centerville Lumber building will become a medical use. This project will be a lower but more dooable scale. Ms. Civitello asked about the Midas Muffler site and the two 1800's homes behind Midas that Quinnipiac just purchased for \$800,000. Mr. Kroop had no information on this site. He spoke with someone from Starbucks while he was in New York but has to talk to their designated broker.

There is no news on the space adjacent to Kohls.

Mr. Kroop explained that with Ms. Regan's help, he is also running the Community Development HUD program until spring.

The new building at the corner of Colonial Drive and Whitney Avenue is 100% occupied. The Liberty Bank building has some tenants, but he is not sure it is 100% occupied.

Mr. Kroop reported the growth will be between Mather Street and Putnam Avenue.

Mr. Kroop also mentioned that the Town needs a new town engineer and a new town planner. The Plan of Conservation and Development must be approved by June 30th. Mr. Kroop has been asked to take a look at the form based regulations to possibly tweak them. Regulations should incentivize not discourage businesses. This commission will be asked to weigh in. He also has to work on parcels with split zoning, which do not comply with the Town's Charter.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Diaz made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DeNicola seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Submitted by: _____
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