



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, February 9, 2016 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. Sachetti, Mr. DelGrego, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Rolnick, Mr. Good, Mr. Rodriguez, Ms. Moses, Ms. Gretencord

Commissioners Excused: Ms. Sacco, Mr. DeNicola,

Others in Attendance: Cindy Civitello and Gail Traester of the West Woods Civic Association, Dave Brancati - Interested Citizen, Dale Kroop - Director of Economic and Community Development, Gerry Tobin - Commission Clerk

1. Call to Order

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

2. Review Minutes of January 12, 2016

Mr. DelGrego made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 12th meeting. Mr. Good seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Report of the Director

The Account Balances Report was attached to the agenda. The Precision Grinding benefit will be paid out shortly. There is currently \$218,104 available. Of the two outstanding loans, one is up to date and the other, which has been behind 30-60 days, has now been upgraded to 1-30 days.

4. Old Businesses

Since the Commission's January meeting, Mr. Kroop has had his first meeting with the solopreneurs. Several financial people had registered, so had to send out a memo that this was not a leads or sales meeting, but for people with home businesses to learn how we can help them. Eventually financing might come into play. There were 27 solopreneurs in attendance and 5 or 6 business people. Unlike cluster meetings where you know what the topics will be, there were 27 different topics. Solopreneurs do everything for themselves. He gave each person two minutes to describe their businesses. Mr. Kops spoke about Zoning. 50% of those in attendance were unaware they needed permits. A common issue was the Assessor. Mr. Kops explained the procedures for obtaining permits. All businesses are supposed to register with the town clerk, and then the assessor comes up. Richard Pearce was at the meeting talking about the Business Assistance Center. In attendance were people with web companies, a landscaper, financial planners and a woman who sells hearing aids, among others. There was

discussion on bartering. They had some suggestions for meeting topics. Some people felt this should be like a support group. If you have a mailing address for your business that is at your home, you need a permit. This is a fast growing genre of the economy. Mr. DelGrego wondered if there was something on the web site like a blog site where these people could interact. Mr. Kroop said we should ask Marjorie Clark of Little Fish, who works out of her house, if something like that could be set up.

Mr. Kroop mentioned the issues the Mayor is going through with his son's illness. He has the budget to do by March 15th. Staff is pitching in. The Mayor wants to fill the town engineer position first, then the town planner position.

At the Residential Real Estate cluster meeting, they were all upset about taxes and the school system. Mr. Kroop is developing a partnership with the Board of Education to address the reputation of Hamden's schools. We have very good programs at the High School. He met with officials at the High School and they will develop a video on some of the programs offered. There was further discussion on the Realtors' perception of Hamden's school system and taxes. Mr. Rolnick said taxes might be lower in other towns, but the housing prices might be higher, which would even out in the end. Mr. Kroop mentioned that site selectors for commercial businesses look carefully at the towns before they would even consider putting a business in a particular location. The Board of Education should make the information available, and Realtors have to use the resources.

5. New Businesses

Tax Incentive Agreement – Hamden Auto Body
2111 Dixwell Avenue

Hamden Auto Body plans to expand their service area and rehab their office space. They plan to spend about \$425,000 on these improvements. They also plan to add 6 employees to their current 17 employees. Mr. Moses asked what the cost of the tax abatement would be to the town. Mr. Kroop did a quick calculation and figured the cost would be about \$2,400 per year. Mr. Moses feels it is important to know this information.

Ms. Gretencord made a motion to approve a tax abatement of 25% for three consecutive years, and a grant in the amount of \$1,000 for Hamden Auto Body. Mr. DelGrego seconded the motion. The vote was eight in favor, one opposed. The motion was approved.

6. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

Mr. Kroop mentioned he will be having a finance and insurance cluster meeting in early March. He is in the process of updating the mailing list.

- Auto Zone is moving along next to Bed Bath and Beyond
- Advanced Auto at the corner of Mather and Dixwell is also coming along and Mr. Kroop showed black and white photos of that development
- There was discussion on the reason for all of the auto businesses opening on Dixwell Avenue. Mr. Kroop said the zoning regulations were redone in 2010, and if you want to prohibit certain business in certain areas, it has to be done in the zoning regulations. There was also discussion on the fact that people are holding on to their cars longer.
- Self Storage – There was discussion on the new Self Storage businesses. Mr. Kroop said a developer spent over \$5 million to purchase Locktite Self Storage on Sherman Avenue
- Carleton Industries is moving from Marne Street to Rossotto Drive and is doing renovations.
- Precision Grinding moved to Corporate Ridge from Wallingford. There will be a ribbon cutting in the spring.

- The pork rind company sold one of their buildings to a French Electrical Parts Distributor and Mr. Kroop is helping them with zoning.

Mr. Kroop said buildings are being filled as they come on the market. There are a couple of buildings on Sherman Avenue coming up. Utility Communications will be selling its 8000 sf building. Mr. Kroop met with a manufacturing company in the State Street area. The business is doing well but the building is much too big. The owner might want to sell the building and maybe the business. There are several options.

Mr. Zambrano asked if Mr. Kroop would consider a road trip to see some of these properties. Mr. Kroop agreed and said he might hold a Manufacturing cluster meeting.

- The Brownstone is doing facade improvement
- On State Street near Ridge, across from Dollar General, Mr. Cuomo is tearing down his building, which is 60-70% vacant. He is helping to relocate the Dancers Shop. Mr. Kroop mentioned a national tenant will be going into a new building on that property
- Wooden Tap will open soon
- There is a new dollar store going in next to Sakura Gardens in the Home Depot plaza.
- Rent is being paid on the Toy's R Us location until 2017, but there is activity going on there.
- The baseball field lights are up at Rochford Field. They are 85' high.

Mr. Kroop mentioned that 4-5 years ago he planned a housing event at the Keefe Center. He charged \$50 per table and include Realtors, finance people, etc. The proceeds went to the food bank. This was a very successful event. He will be planning an energy fair, using the same idea, for residential and small businesses, with the proceeds also going to the food bank.

Centerville Lumber

This project has a new developer and will be on a smaller, more manageable scale. A take out restaurant with a few tables will locate in the paint building, a name brand hotel with 100 rooms will be to the rear of the property, and the lumber building will house a physical therapy business.

Mr. Kroop and Ms. Dudcik did the High School DECA Shark Tank. There were six teams of two, and a few days prior each team was given a rubber band. They had to come up with a business plan. Three of the teams were fabulous. The thinking and production of the winner was very impressive with a great power point presentation.

7. Adjournment

Mr. DelGrego made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Gretencord seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

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