

Economic Development Commission

November 3, 2014 Regular Meeting

Windham Town Hall

979 Main St., Willimantic, CT

Call to Order: Robert Horrocks as the acting Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM. Those present were Pamela DeVivo, Robert Horrocks, Victor Funderburk, and John McCommas. Also in attendance: Jim Turner, representing the Whitewater Partnership and James Finger, as staff.

Citizens& delegations comments/questions –Jim Turner, from the Whitewater Partnership, came before the board to discuss the NEA Our Town Grant. The benefits of the whitewater park that would be created with the grant funds were discussed. The required 10% match would be made up with \$10,000 from the Whitewater Partnership, \$5,000 from ECSU, and \$5,000 from the Town of Windham. After much discussion of this important economic engine, it was Moved by Commissioner McCommas and Seconded by Commissioner Funderburk to endorse the NEA Our Town Grant application and recommend funding of the cash match from the town. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Review/approval of Minute – September 29, 2014. Minutes of the September 29, 2014 were reviewed by commissioners. MOVED by Commissioner McCommas and SECONDED by Commissioner Funderburk to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2014 meeting. Motion carried.

Old Business

Business Calling Program– Commissioner Horrocks reported on local businesses need for advice on how to apply for grants. Local businesses discussed included Cafémantic, A Cupcake for Later, and CLiK (Commercially Licensed Kitchens), and others. After much discussion, Commissioner Horrocks suggested, and other commissioners agreed, it would be a good idea to invite local business owners for an open discussion, and to determine how this commission can help them.

Downtown Arts & Eats District –Commissioner Horrocks reported on planned events on the first Saturday of each month, 11:00 to 3 or 4:00, with local restaurants offering specials, musicians playing on corners and in restaurants, and otherspecial events. Commissioner Funderburk reported on success of the first Arts & Eats walk.

Commissioner Horrocks reported on the program to display the work of local artists, in the windows of local businesses. Commissioners discussed the potential and particulars of this project.

Windham Airport - Mr. Finger reported on the upcoming November 13th meeting, regarding the State's need for easements needed to extend the runways at the airport. Commissioners discussed the proposed project and its benefits to the region. Moved by Commissioner McCommas and Seconded by Commissioner Funderburk to write a letter to the council for action to approve the easements required to improve the efficiency of the airport. Motion Carried.

Business Signage Program underway –Mr. Finger reported that the Business Signage is underway. Commissioners discussed particulars; signs are larger than expected. Placement of the signage was discussed.

Chairman's Report–Commissioner DeVivo asked that this commission to oppose the Town Council plans to convert the TinTsin lot to a park. After much discussion it was Moved by Commissioner DeVivo, and Seconded by Commissioner McCommas to recommend to the Town Council that the Tin Tsin lot be developed as a parking lot. The space could include some murals, a bus shelter, and some performance space, so it could be used as community space during festivals and events. Also, access to Riverside Drive should be included. Motion Carried.

MOVED by Commissioner Horrocks and SECONDED by Commissioner DeVivo to adjourn the meeting at 9:10p.m. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Janet Laukaitis for James Finger, Planner/Business Liaison