

Economic Development Commission

December 2, 2013

Windham Town Hall

Meeting Room

979 Main St., Willimantic, CT

Call to Order: Chairman Hettinger called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM. Those present were Bill Hettinger, Bob Horrocks, Victor Funderburk and John McCommas. Also in attendance, State Representative Susan Johnson; and James Finger as staff.

Citizens & delegations comments/questions - Representative Johnson came before the board and discussed Windham's need for a full-time Economic Development Director. Commissioner Funderburk stressed the need for a clear goal for the Town of Windham. Representative Johnson agreed with Commissioner Funderburk and possible economic development goals for the Town of Windham were discussed.

Review/approval of Minute – November 4, 2013. Moved by Commissioner Funderburk, Seconded by Commissioner McCommas to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2013 meeting. Motion passed.

Community Vision Topic - Our Town Grant – Commissioner Hettinger reported that he had contacted and met with community and local non-profit agencies, and discussed the Our Town grant and place-making. At the meeting it was decided that time is too short to do anything in 2014 but, instead it was decided to form an ad hoc committee which would develop ideas and discuss funding possibilities. Chairman Hettinger felt valuable connections had been made. He opened the subject for discussion. Commissioner Funderburk discussed the importance of place-making. Many sources of funding would be available, once a group is unified with a common goal. The next step is a meeting scheduled for January 19, 2014 and Chairman Hettinger suggested that this commission take the lead on organizing this ad hoc committee.

Representative Johnson stated that grant-writing must be focused on the needs of the grantor as well as the grantee. Commissioner Horrocks described place-making as establishing Windham as a destination, a place people want to spend time and money.

The commissioners discussed the subject of economic development and the possibility of hiring a full time Economic Development Coordinator. Innovation, place-making, and improvement of rail transportation in the region were all discussed. The need for and role of a full time Economic Development Coordinator will be on the agenda for the next meeting of this commission.

New Business

2014 Meeting Schedules

This commission will continue to meet on the first Monday of the month, at 7:30 p.m.

Old Business

The benefits, boundaries and possible expansion of the Enterprise Zone was discussed. The Enterprise Zone provides tax breaks to manufacturers that expand in the zone. Commissioners discussed expansion of the Enterprise Zone west from Jackson Street, down Main Street to Bridge Street, and North to Valley Street, also west to Tuckie Road.

Business Signage – Design examples of business signage will be presented at the next meeting.

Business Calling Program – none

Downtown Subcommittee activities/reports – none

Other grant opportunities – none

Chairman's Report – Chairman Hettinger reported on a presentation by Greg Lewis, from the Small Business Development Council (SBDC). Greg Lewis gave a presentation on SBDC programs which provide assistance and advice to small businesses. Chairman Hettinger believes an important dialogue has been opened between the SBDC and the town.

Citizens & delegations comments/questions –none

It was Moved by Commissioner McCommas and Seconded by Commissioner Funderburk to adjourn the meeting at 9:47.

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