

Economic Development Commission

March 3, 2014

Windham Town Hall

Former Recreation Office

979 Main St., Willimantic, CT

Call to Order: the Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 7:40 PM. Those present were Bill Hettinger, Bob Horrocks, Victor Funderburk, John McCommas and Cathleen Eldridge. Also in attendance, Ryan Jacobs, SBDC, and James Finger as staff.

Citizens & delegations comments/questions – Ryan Jacobs expressed his enthusiasm for economic development in Windham and commissioners suggested he should go online to windhamct.com and complete an application to join this commission.

Review/approval of Minute – February 10, 2014. Moved by Commissioner Horrocks, Seconded by Commissioner Funderburk to approve the minutes as presented. Motion Carried.

Community Vision Topics

Arts Grant project – Chairman Hettinger reported that the meeting originally scheduled for February 13, 2014 was cancelled due to inclement weather. The meeting has been rescheduled for March 6, 2014 in ECSU's Schaffer Hall at 3:30. Mr. Finger reported that the University has applied for an ACP grant that would be used for arts and education program funds.

Commissioner Funderburk spoke about place-making and the need to make a plan and work to promote that plan. He has contacted local businesses and interest is high in promoting the arts district. The Willi Arts and Eats district has been established by the Windham Theater Guild. The goal is to increase attendance at restaurants and arts events by 50%. He described Miami, FL's Winwood, an arts district created in 2005, and compared it to Windham. The State is pushing place-making and funds are available. Commissioner Hettinger described the Gallery Night that is held in Key West and suggests that Willimantic is a good place to do the same.

New Business – Enterprise and Airport Development District boundaries – Possible expansion of the entertainment district/arts district were described and discussed. Chairman Hettinger asked how we go forward with the changes. He asked Mr. Finger to check with DECD to be sure we follow the rules. He would like to see the zone expanded as much as possible.

It was decided to bring a map to the next meeting and decide what changes are wanted; and then bring suggested changes to the Town Council. Ryan Jacobs suggested that arts and entertainment district incentives aren't enough, something has to be done to improve the reputation of Windham so businesses want to come here.

Old Business

Economic Development Officer – description

Commissioners Hettinger, Horrocks and Eldridge coordinated to re-work the job description for the Economic Development Director position, and the draft was handed out. The budget includes money for this position. And, the possibility of sharing the position with another town or contracting for the position was discussed.

After further discussion of the job description, it was suggested that the acronym CEcD should be spelled out. Mr. Finger suggested that it should be suggested that the position would have some supervision by the Economic Development Commission. Moved by Commissioner Funderburk, Seconded by Commissioner Horrocks to accept the Economic Development Director job description as amended. Motion Carried.

Business Signage –Commission Horrocks got a \$150.00 price from Signs Plus and contacted Willard’s Hardware, the Willimantic Co-op, and Design Center East, who all expressed interest in the business signs. from Signs Plus for a mock-up of the proposed signage. Chairman Hettinger will contact the Town Manager to determine how to implement this project.

Business Calling – Chairman Hettinger talked to staff at Willard’s Hardware who reported that the winter weather is keeping people at home.

Chairman’s Report – Review of possible grants – Chairman Hettinger reported that the Town Manager announced that funding is released for connecting the trail from Mackey’s to the Airline Trail.

Chairman Hettinger reported on a meeting he attended at Senator Don William’s office. The meeting included Tom DeVivo, Matt Vertefeulle, Neil Beets, legislative representatives, a representative from the Governor’s office, and the Deputy Commissioner of DECD.

DECD reported that there is no money for a parking garage in Windham, no money for development of a town park on donated land in Windham Center; no money for the façade program, and on money for business incubator.

The good news was that there may be money available for planning. Commissioner Funderburk suggested arts planning as a potential use of planning funds. Commission Horrocks mentioned the TinTsin lot on Main Street in Willimantic. There was much discussion of the lot and its’ possibilities.

Mr. Finger reported that Susan Johnson and Tom DeVivo worked on an Urban Act grant application for a parking garage and submitted it to Senator Don Williams’ office.

Other reports/correspondence/announcements – None

Citizens & delegations comments/questions - None

It was Moved by Commissioner Horrocks and Seconded by Commissioner Funderburk to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. Motion Carried.

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