

ENFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES

Thursday, ~~November~~ June 17~~30~~, 2021 – ~~67~~:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call

Chairman Turner took the roll and present were Commissioners Kelly Davis, Richard Szewczak, Kelly Hemmeler, Marilynn Cressotti, Phillip Kober, Marie Pyznar, Richard Stroiney and Mary Ann Turner. Absent was Commissioner Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall.

Also present were Laurie Whitten, Director of Development Services; Nelson Tereso, Deputy Director of Economic & Community Development and Elizabeth Bouley, Recording Secretary.

Approval of Minutes

The approval of minutes was tabled as the Commission had not received the minutes prior to the meeting.

Report From Development Services

Ms. Whitten stated that they are currently scheduling for the TIF Steering Committee and also working on farm winery and brewery regulations.

Ms. Whitten stated that Staff will be working with the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) to try to sell 52 Prospect Street. She went on to state that they are working on data for the S&P bond rating and also mentioned the Farmer's Market and community gardens.

Ms. Whitten stated that there is extra money in the budget so they are trying to reorganize the Planning and Building Departments with new shelving and desks, which will help both departments run better.

Ms. Whitten stated that Blair Manor went before the PZC for an apartment complex and was denied. Commissioner Pyznar asked if they were denied because of parking, to which Ms. Whitten replied that they were denied because of apartment size. Discussion took place regarding whether apartment size is included within the regulations.

Mr. Tereso introduced Nikki Ouellette and Justin, stating that they work for the Fairfield Inn by Marriott. Mr. Tereso stated that he invited them to attend tonight's meeting to provide the Commission with an update on where things stand with the Fairfield Inn.

Commissioner Turner asked when the grand opening is, to which Ms. Ouellette replied that it is Thursday, June 24 from 5 to 7:30 PM. Commissioner Turner encouraged the Commissioners to attend the grand opening.

Ms. Ouellette stated that they had demolished half of the building and there are a lot of upgrades. She stated that they are very happy to be back in business.

Commissioner Pyznar stated that she had an out of town friend who stayed at the Inn and raved about it.

Mr. Tereso asked how many rooms they have and what the amenities are. Ms. Ouellette stated that there are 172 rooms and described some of the amenities including a grab and go breakfast, pool, fitness center, wi-fi and office space.

Mr. Tereso asked if there has been any activity at the Mass Mutual facility. Ms. Ouellette stated that the traffic in and out is minimal so they must still be remote.

Justin, the new Sales and E-commerce Manager, addressed the Commission. He stated that the grand opening will be poolside with good food and a live performance.

Commissioner Turner asked Justin if he lives in Enfield. Justin stated that he does and explained the area of town he lives in.

Ms. Whitten asked if there are still banquet facilities. Ms. Ouellette stated that there are about 3,000 square feet (SF) and described where the banquet space is located within the building.

Justin asked for the Commissioners' email addresses so he can send the RSVP link. Mr. Tereso stated that he will send them.

Liaison Reports

Commissioner Szewczak stated that he has been out of town and is just catching up. He stated that he was disappointed about Blair Manor. Commissioner Turner stated that they should not second guess the PZC, and they probably had reasons for voting the way they did.

Discussion took place regarding the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) meeting that took place the night before.

Commissioner Turner stated that Hartford should not be making zoning decisions for Enfield.

Commissioner Kober provided the Commission with an Agricultural Committee update.

Discussion took place regarding whether the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be removed from the agenda. It was decided that they can be built into the liaison reports

Discussion Items

Discussion took place regarding the tour and conversation some of the Commissioners participated in with Mr. Troiano regarding the rails to trails. Commissioner Stroiney encouraged any Commissioners and members of the public to speak to Mr. Troiano about the mixture of oil and how it is done. He went on to state that the trains themselves are a scheduled event and based on demand. Mr. Stroiney stated that this project offers a lot of opportunity to minimize the impact on the environment, and that the material is biodegradable if there is a spill.

Commissioner Szewczak pointed out that there was a grant involved and explained why he is still skeptical. Commissioner Stroiney stated that this is the only station in Connecticut prepared to do this at the moment, which is a testament to Enfield. He stated that regardless of whether there was a grant, there was still a risk to set it up.

Commissioner Turner encouraged people to speak to Mr. Troiano because it was very fascinating to learn how it all works.

Commissioner Pynzar stated that she sees the benefit to both a rail and a trail, and it would be ideal to have both.

Commissioner Szewczak stated that they will all need to accept the decision of the government regarding whether it is going to be a rail or a trail.

Commissioner Turner asked if anyone attended the DOT thing at the Town Council. Commissioner Pynzar stated that she did and had wanted to hear from the leasing agent, who kept freezing. She stated that what she took away is that it is out of their hands.

Mr. Tereso stated that ultimately it goes to Washington for the final call to be made.

Commissioner Pynzar stated that the one question that was not answered is the cost. Discussion took place regarding the costs associated with a rail and/or a trail.

Commissioner Turner asked if there was any timeline, to which Mr. Mateo replied that there is not.

Commissioner Turner requested an update on the Winstanley North Maple project. Ms. Whitten stated that they are having a groundbreaking on Tuesday, June 29. Ms. Whitten stated that their bonds are being posted and they are getting ready to start working.

Ms. Whitten described the project, which she stated is a 500,000 SF distribution center. She stated that the residents appealed the application and it went to court, but they decided to work it out amongst themselves. Ms. Whitten stated that there was a stipulated judgment that was approved by the residents and the applicants. She described the additional requirements including increasing the berm, additional landscaping, a sound wall, sidewalk and traffic flow signage.

Commissioner Turner asked if the EDC is on the invitation list for the groundbreaking. Ms. Whitten stated that she will ask the Town Manager.

New Business

Historical Walking Tour With Jim Malley

Commissioner Turner stated that she needs to speak with Jim Malley and figure out a time. Mr. Tereso stated that he is doing tours all summer.

Commissioner Turner asked if there is a charge for the walking tours, to which Mr. Tereso replied that it is subsidized through a grant from the state and therefore free of charge for

residents The Commission discussed what days and times would be best for them to attend one of the walking tours.

Ms. Whitten asked if the Commission wants to keep up virtual meetings or switch to in-person. The Commission decided to keep virtual meetings for the time being.

Adjournment

Commissioner Pyznar made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.