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DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

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East Hartford Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 24, 2022

Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams/Teleconference

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rosario called the meeting to order at 5:58 PM.

Members Present:

Veronica Rosario, Chair
Jim Arsenault, Jr.
Brennden Colbert
Erwin Hurst
Anita Morrison
John Morrison
Angie Parkinson

Members Absent:

Joelle Murchison, Vice Chair
Victor Rosas-Granda

Guests Present:

Jeff Cormier, Town Planner
Michael Daniels, Economic Development Coordinator
Juliet Kapsis

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Morrison moved to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Colbert seconded the motion.

All voted in favor, none voted opposed

Motion Passed

3. PLANNING & ZONING MASTER PLAN REFERRAL

Town Planner Jeff Cormier presented a master plan application for the DDD1 zone that will go before the Planning & Zoning Commission. National Development is proposing logistics warehouses and research and development buildings at Rentschler Field. They have already received a change to the Plan of Conservation and Development, are now applying for the master plan change, and then will need to apply for a site plan. The master plan application is referred to a number of commissions, including EDC, for feedback.

Mr. Hurst asked what kind of businesses are expected to locate at the development and if internship opportunities for local students might be available. Mr. Morrison and Ms. Parkinson discussed the presentations that National Development has made to the Town Council, saying they believe high-tech manufacturing, biotech, and medical equipment development are likely uses. They said these uses could create internship opportunities and partnerships with Goodwin University. They said they have found National Development to be helpful and willing to work collaboratively with the Town so far.

Chair Rosario suggested that East Hartford CONNects should reach out to the new tenants for their Summer Youth Employment program for local high school students. She asked if there can be an emphasis on hiring local residents and the tenants having a presence at community events. Ms. Parkinson said she hoped the tenants would voluntarily try to hire from the local community and suggested the possibility of field trips for local school students at the R&D facilities.

Mr. Hurst asked if there would still be additional developable land at Rentschler Field beyond this proposal. Mr. Morrison said there is still the possibility of developing sites nearer to Silver Lane. Ms. Parkinson and Chair Rosario said they hope the influx of jobs will lead to additional new businesses on the Silver Lane corridor. Ms. Parkinson said she is excited for the potential growth, jobs, disposable income, and visitors that the development could help bring.

Mr. Hurst moved to have the Commission prepare comments for the Planning & Zoning Commission via a Google Document circulated via email prior to the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on April 13th. Mr. Colbert seconded the motion.

All voted in favor, none voted opposed

Motion Passed

4. BROCHURE OF RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

Continuing the discussion of creating a brochure from the last meeting, Mr. Hurst recommended including information specifically targeting information for smaller businesses. Chair Rosario suggested incorporating feedback from the Chamber of Commerce based on the Small Business Support Hours at the Library to help create the brochure. Ms. Parkinson suggested the flyer be limited to a few key points, with QR codes directing businesses to more information online. Mr. Daniels said he will draft a potential flyer for the next meeting.

5. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COLLABORATION

Mr. Daniels discussed the upcoming Small Business Support Hours at the Library and the twice-monthly East Hartford Networking events at Goodwin University as ways that the commission members and local small businesses can connect with the Chamber. He suggested the commission could reach out to the Chamber regarding their idea of hosting an event highlighting the East Hartford business community to discuss partnership possibilities.

6. FUTURE MEETING PLANNING

The Commissioners discussed returning to in-person meetings, starting with the April meeting. Chair Rosario and Ms. Parkinson suggested the possibility of hybrid meetings via Microsoft Teams or conference calls to accommodate members who are not able to attend in person. Chair Rosario also suggested scheduling more meetings at businesses, similar to how the December dinner meeting is held at a local restaurant.

7. BUSINESS VISIT SCHEDULE

Rebel Dog Coffee Co. is willing to host the commissioners for a visit on a Thursday or Friday afternoon. The members discussed scheduling a visit at Rebel Dog on Friday, April 8th, at 4:00 PM. Mr. Daniels will confirm with Rebel Dog.

8. DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Popeyes Chicken has submitted an application for 24 High Street and will go to Planning & Zoning in April. Tom Nenortas is working to determine ownership of the dam at 87 Church Street as part of his effort to reactivate the hydroelectric generation for Moxi on the Rocks.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Morrison moved to adjourn.
Mr. Colbert seconded the motion.
All voted in favor, none voted opposed
Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned at 6:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Daniels
Economic Development Coordinator