

Town of Fairfield

Office of Community & Economic Development

Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting

February 3, 2011

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on February 3, 2011 at 8:00 a.m. in the Old Town Hall Conference Room.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Penczer, Chairman; Sally Ward; Chris LaSala; Abbas Nadim

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Don Peterson; Lisa Joaquim, Fairfield Chamber of Commerce

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of January 6, 2011 were approved.

Commerce Drive Planning Study

Mr. Barnhart said that after the last meeting, he met with Mr. Kooris and Mr. Devonshuk of P & Z for further discussion of the proposed zone changes. He asked if the staff intended to develop a synopsis and rationale for the proposal. Mr. Nadim asked which interest groups would be served by the changes, and what the net benefits to the town would be. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 22, 2011.

Mr. Penczer asked if there was comment from the public on the proposed changes. There was none.

Train Station Project

Mr. Barnhart said work was proceeding on the wetland mitigation, recreation area trails, and observation decks. The hydraulic control wall has been installed. He said the work is still ahead of schedule. The parking area must be ready before the station could be operable.

2011 Goals/Objectives

Mr. Nadim would like to see the EDC encourage sustainability in development. He suggested that the Commission evolve from a passive to an active committee. He questioned what the body can do, not just individuals.

Mr. LaSala suggested expanding the partnership between the Town of Fairfield and Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University. He suggested collecting data as to where students spend their time in town, what time of day they are likely to be there, etc. He said the Commission could build on that data to find ways to interact with the schools.

Mr. Barnhart asked that specific suggestions be e-mailed to him for inclusion in the next meeting.

Suggestions from members of the public included the development of a local discount card for the university students. It would not be so costly for the merchants, according to Ms. Joaquim. She also spoke about the opposition of Fairfield to connecting its trails to the 2000-mile trail connecting Canada to Florida. She suggests that the town could add to and improve bike trails.

Mr. Peterson said he would be willing to develop 'strike zone tools' to be used in the approval process for zoning changes. These would identify the 20 most important attributes of a deal and would establish that the process is not random. He said he developed such a decision making aid while at GE.

Mr. Barnhart suggested that it would be useful to have discussion on such a plan in order to develop guidelines. Mr. Peterson said the EDC could start the process and then take it to other stakeholders.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is March 3, 2011.

Respectfully submitted:

Gretchen Goethner