

Town of Fairfield

**Office of Community & Economic Development
Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting**

September 8, 2011

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Penczer, Chairman; Maureen Abrahamson; Brian Silvestro; Abbas Nadim; Bruce Manasevit

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Don Peterson; Sally Parker; Harvey Sussman

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

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of August 4, 2011 were approved.

Train Station Project

Mr. Barnhart said the road and parking lot would be completed by the end of October. The state has added funds and the contractor is working long days and Saturdays in order to finish the job. He discussed the costs and contracts concerning the removal of contaminated soil. There is a history of environmental studies of this property, he said, but remediation of brownfield sites is an inexact science. Shoreline remediation work will continue. Mr. Penczer asked if there were plans for an opening ceremony. Mr. Barnhart said he was unaware of any current plans but was sure there would be something forthcoming. He said letters have gone out to existing permit holders asking if they wish to make changes in their location. The state still has a punch list and no C Of O has been issued.

EDC Questionnaire/Decision Matrix

Mr. Barnhart said he had e-mailed the proposed questionnaire to commissioners. He thanked those who had responded with comments. He has asked Lee Domeika to condense the material to a single page and has drafted a letter to land use attorneys in the area inviting their comments. The purpose of this questionnaire is to give the EDC some basic information about proposed projects in order to take position on developments. Mr. Peterson said he had no further comments about the form of the questionnaire. Ms. Abrahamson asked if there were any applicants active at this time. Mr. Barnhart said he has been asked for some spur of the moment help lately and that in those cases he has given a general endorsement to the jobs. He noted that there has been some increase in activity before the code enforcement committee. He cited the opening of some new businesses: ShopRite, Chips, and a yogurt shop. Honda of Westport has filed an application. Dr. Abbas asked if there was anything in the zoning code to limit the number of businesses of a kind. Mr. Barnhart said the town could only suggest and advise. He mentioned that a change in Fairfield's zoning regulations to allow the serving of liquor in more restaurants contributed to the increase of those types of business and to the health of the business community.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Manasevit asked why there was difficulty with the application for a medical building on the corner of Sasco Hill Road and the Post. Road. Mr. Barnhart said he met with the property owners and suggested they talk with the neighbors to see if they could resolve concerns.

Ms. Abrahamson asked when the Mill Plain Bridge work would be complete as she says its closing has hurt downtown businesses. Mr. Barnhart did not have a date.

Mr. Barnhart said there is no new information regarding the Exide site though First Selectman Tetreau has met with company representatives.

Mr. Penczer asked if it was time to contact the police department about working on a plan for holiday traffic conditions. Mr. Barnhart said he would invite the Police Chief to the next meeting.

Regarding the timing of the traffic lights n the Commerce Drive area, Mr. Barnhart said the local police can recommend changes but the state has the ultimate control.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

The next meeting will be on October 6, 2011

Respectfully submitted:

Gretchen Goethner