

**Town of Fairfield
Office of Community & Economic Development
Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting
December 8, 2011**

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

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

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Don Peterson; Sally Parker; Ross Ogden; Patricia Ritchie, Chamber of Commerce

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of October 13, 2011 and November 10, 2011 were approved.

Meeting Schedule

The proposed meeting schedule was approved as presented. The meetings will take place on the second Thursday of the month.

Election of Officers

Mr. Nadim proposed that the following slate:

Chair: Peter Penczer

Vice-Chair: Chris LaSala

Secretary: Maureen Abrahamson

The slate was unanimously elected.

Train Station Project

Mr. Barnhart said the station is in use. Mr. Nadim thanked Mr. Barnhart for his dedication to the completion of this project. Mr. Barnhart thanked the EDC for its support during the planning and construction process. He said the station is the biggest income initiative in the Town of Fairfield. Mr. Manasevit asked if the state would be involved as the private developer proceeds with building. Mr. Barnhart said the issue of use of the parking lot for equipment and supplies will be an issue when the time comes and the state will be involved at that time.

Downtown Traffic Concerns

Mr. Penczer summarized the discussion with the police officers that took place at the last meeting.

- There will be follow-up with Fairfield University regarding the bus routes to the bookstore.
- More in depth meetings will be held with the state regarding parking and traffic vis a vis the train station.
- Officers have been visiting downtown businesses to inform them of security issues.

Business Retention Program

Mr. Barnhart said that First Selectman Tetreau has expressed an interest in the program. Mr. Penczer said that personal visits by commissioners to local businesses was affective some years ago and could be useful again. Mr. Manasevit

said developers see upcoming trends and should be surveyed. Mr. Barnhart suggested the formation of an expanded Business Retention Group. This could be an objective for the coming year. Mr. Nadim suggested using the Regional Plan Association report as a guideline. Mr. Barnhart said there is grant funding available to conduct surveys of this kind and he expects to apply for them. One would focus on Congestion Mitigation, and another on potential uses for construction projects. He foresees another charette to engage stakeholders in development projections. Mr. Barnhart said the next P& Z meeting will be consider planning for these areas.

Other Business

Mr. Nadim commented that business seemed to be slow at Whole Foods. Mr. Barnhart said that they seem to have planned for the long haul.

Mr. Manasevit was thanked for his service on the Commission. He will still serve on the Micro-enterprise Committee. He is also forming an advisory committee to plan the future direction of the Fairfield Theater Company.

Mr. Barnhart said the Post Office Building on the Post Road is on the market. Ms. Parker said she hoped someone was aware of the Depression-era murals in the building and that they should be preserved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

The next meeting will be on January 12, 2012.

Respectfully submitted:

Gretchen Goethner