

Town of Fairfield
Office of Community & Economic Development
Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting

March 8, 2012

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on March 8, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Old Town Hall Conference Room.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Penczer, Chairman; Sally Ward; Abbas Nadim; Maureen Abrahamson; Brian Silvestro; Don Peterson

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Distributions: CDBG Entitlement Funding Chart, FFY2002-2012; Budget Request, Community and Economic Development Department

Minutes: The minutes of February 9, 2012 were approved.

Marketing Fairfield

Mr. Barnhart said he had shared the commissioners' comments regarding the video with the producers. They will incorporate these suggestions where practical. A new proof will be forthcoming.

Mr. Nadim asked what the cost would be to rent a billboard at the highway entrances to the state. The purpose would be to showcase Fairfield either in stills or videos. Mr. Barnhart will investigate this possibility.

Mr. Barnhart said the comments made about the independent web site were appreciated. He will meet soon with Merry Uk, town web master, and develop an RFP for further work. He said Selectman Tetreau was enthusiastic about a separate EDC site linked to the other town sites.

Business Workshop

Mr. Barnhart said the EDC and UI are co-sponsoring an energy workshop on April 3 at 7:00 a.m. at the Dolan School of Fairfield University. It may be titled "Go Green and Save Some Green" and will present information on loans to small businesses to be used for energy use reduction. An EDC commissioner, Ms. Abrahamson, will be one of the panelists. Mr. Barnhart said he was also working with the Chamber of Commerce to promote the event. Mr. Peterson suggested that this would be an occasion to survey small business owners. Mr. Nadim suggested asking FU if graduate students should be involved in statistical analysis of information gleaned from the meeting.

Fairfield Center

Mr. Barnhart said he had submitted a grant application for funds with which to survey key development sites in the downtown area. He expects to hear in April if his request has been granted. The request was for \$40,000. The town and UI have each committed \$5,000.

Mr. Barnhart said the town might sponsor a restaurant week in the fall and look to the following year for a more elaborate celebration to be held town wide.

Budget/CBDG

Mr. Barnhart said he would be appearing at a budget hearing on March 13. He would be requesting funds be allocated from the general fund to support a position in his department that would handle Economic Development activities. The other position is included in the CBDG allocation and is devoted to Community Development initiatives. He noted that the CBDG budget is the lowest in 10 years.

Other Business

Mr. Nadim asked if the town has any funds devoted to Public Relations. Mr. Barnhart said that currently, any PR effort emanates from his office. Mr. Nadim suggested the Real Estate Board might be willing to contribute to a fund for this purpose. Mr. Barnhart referred to the video and web site as the available materials for promoting the town.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

The next meeting will be on April 12, 2012.

Respectfully submitted:

Gretchen Goethner