

*Town of Fairfield*

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

July 12, 2012

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on July 12, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Old Town Hall Conference Room.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Peter Penczer, Chairman; Chris LaSala; Don Peterson; Maureen Abrahamson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Peter Ambrose, Attorney

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

*Minutes:*

The minutes of June 2012 were approved.

*Project Updates:*

*Post Office*

Mr. Barnhart said this building has been purchased. It is anticipated that it will undergo some demolition and new construction to provide retail space. The developers will likely attend the August meeting of the EDC to present their plans. They hope to be before the TP&Z by September.

*Proposed Medical Office Building*

Mr. Barnhart said there is a public hearing on this plan on July 24<sup>th</sup>. He has sent a letter of support for the project, mentioning the conditions expressed by the EDC.

**Marketing Fairfield**

The video is now available on YouTube and is linked to the Town web site. The First Selectman's office is having the Town web page redesigned. Mr. Barnhart would like to see a separate site for the EDC as well as the link.

*Train Station*

Mr. Barnhart said that the last stage of remediation is close to completion. Some casting sand is still being removed. He expects this phase to be complete within 30 days.

*Exide*

Mr. Barnhart said the revised remedial plan for Mill River is ready for the DEEP to approve. A formal public hearing will be held.

*R. Jinishian Gallery*

Mr. Barnhart said his office provided support for the zone approval for the move of this gallery to a Greenfield Hill space.

### ***TriState Transportation Grant***

Mr. Barnhart said Fairfield was not awarded a \$50,000 grant but that UI has contributed \$5,000 that will be used by the TP&Z to conduct a visioning process similar to the study of the Commerce Drive area. It will concentrate on the area from Mill Plain Road to Southport. The goal will be to see if the regulations should be amended to meet current needs of the town.

### ***Fairfield Center:***

Mr. LaSala asked if there was any progress toward reopening of the Community Theater. Mr. Barnhart said he is in touch with the property owner and talking with potential users. The goal is to keep it as a theater space with diversified offerings.

### ***Main Street Investment Trust***

Mr. Barnhart said he is applying for funds that would be used to extend the Fairfield Center Streetscape. He is relying on a Fairfield Center Improvement Plan of 1984 and if funds were granted from the MSIT they would be used to revise the existing plan and encourage private owners to improve the facades of their buildings. One of the goals would be to strengthen the architectural standards as they apply to downtown.

### ***Restaurant Week***

Mr. Barnhart said the plans for this event are progressing. He is looking for contacts at restaurants and would welcome assistance. He would like to include musical entertainment and is seeking recommendations of small ensembles. Another idea is to use some empty space downtown for the display of artwork.

### ***Commission Work Plan/Goals***

Mr. Penczer announced that his term would expire in November. He suggested that the First Selectman be invited to a coming meeting to share his views on town development. He suggested that this is a time for new officers, new EDC members and new goals for the future and that the Commission devote time to these questions before November.

### ***Other Business***

ArtSpace will be opening on Sanford Street in September.

Rings End will be opening behind the Shell Station on the Post Road.

Panera Bread will be opening on Black Rock Turnpike.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2012.

Respectfully submitted:

Gretchen Goethner