

Town of Fairfield

Office of Community & Economic Development

Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting

December 13, 2012

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on December 13, 2012 at 8:00 a.m. in the Old Town Hall Conference Room.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Peter Penczer, Chairman; Don Peterson Brian Silvestro; and Maureen Abrahamson

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Sean McDonnell, Cushman & Wakefield

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:07 a.m.

Minutes: The minutes of November 8, 2012 were approved.

Medical Space Availability

Mr. McDonnell of Cushman & Wakefield described the need for medical office space in Fairfield and adjoining counties. Many unused buildings are being adapted for these uses and new facilities are being built. His firm is witnessing a growth in urgent care centers connected with local hospitals. Solo practitioners and small practice groups are banding together and being absorbed. He expressed concern about the proposing regulations that would limit the size of medical office facilities in the neighborhood design business district (NDBD). He noted medical office developments underway or recently built in surrounding communities. Mr. McDonnell said that Fairfield owing to its central location is a very desirable place in which to locate medical office buildings and facilities. He urged the Commission to help develop policies that would meet the growing demand for medical office space and add to the commercial tax base.

Mr. Penczer said that the population of the state is static. He questioned how the proposed regulations would impact physicians and their employees. Commissioners noted that a project to construct a medical office building on Reef Road was approved but never built. Mr. McDonnell stated that internal disagreements over strategic direction caused the hospital to suspend plans to build the Reef Road facility. Regarding the proposed regulations, several commissioners questioned the lack of notice of a hearing open to the public.

Mr. McDonnell said that his company has a waiting list of possible tenants looking for blocs of space. Commission members discussed whether Commerce Drive would be a viable option for such facilities.

Ms. Abrahamson suggested asking a member of the Town Plan & Zoning Commission (TPZ) to attend an EDC meeting to exchange ideas on development needs for the town and to consider the information provided by Mr. McDonnell regarding the demand for medical office space in Fairfield County.

Mr. Penczer asked Mr. Barnhart to draft a letter to TPZ to share the Commission's concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the NDBD zoning regulations.

2013 Calendar

The Commission adopted the proposed calendar for 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2013

Respectfully submitted:

Gretchen Goethner