



TOWN of
THOMPSON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

THOMPSON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Minutes – Regular Meeting
Wednesday, April 16, 2008
Seney Room – Town Hall

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Present: David DaVia, Beverly Kennedy, Alan Pratt,

Staff Present: Kevin Kennedy, Planner; Judy Hoyt, Clerk

Guest: Avery Tillinghast,

Call to Order: Vice Chairman, David Davia, called the meeting to order at 7:08PM.

Review/Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: A quorum was not present so the Minutes of March 19, 2008 could not be approved. There was one correction; the spelling of Sean should be Shawn.

Chairman's Comments and Update(s): Vice Chairman, David DaVia, reported that he had drafted the letter in support of the business park on Reardon Road. The letter has been finalized and was sent to John Kimball, Inland Wetlands Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission. He attended the Better Business Bureau meeting. Some of the information from that meeting was that Connecticut is #1 in taxes in the entire country. Next are New York, #3- New Jersey, and #4- Nevada. Oklahoma is the lowest. This creates an uphill battle in CT to attract new business into the area. On the positive side; CT has the highest educated workforce in the country. The next meeting of the Better Business Bureau is on Wednesday, April 25, 2008 from 7 to 9pm at Cranberry Brook, Brooklyn, CT. Anyone may attend these meetings. The Renewable Energy Committee will meet Wednesday, May 14, 2008 at 10am. They will be discussing 8 hydro-power sites. There is a fair amount of interest in the use of alternative power in Thompson.

Kevin Kennedy, Director of Planning & Development Update & Update on Business Park: Kevin handed out a 2008 Business Outlook Survey from the Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. This report breaks down concerns for our area on a larger scale. A population dip will occur in the numbers of school age children, and a rise will occur in the elderly population. As elders lose their spouse we need to look at the needs of these people who are over the age of 80. More overage 55 retirement home and extended care facilities will be needed in the future. The Commission needs to begin to envision the type of businesses in Thompson that need to be recruited to serve our aging citizens. The application for the Business Park has been received by the Town.



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Citizen Comments: None

Guest Speaker: David DaVia introduced Avery Tillinghast, Chairman of the Canterbury Economic Development Commission. Mr. Tillinghast spent many years fundraising for hospitals, especially Day Kimball. He has organized several EDC forums. He also has been involved for many years with the Rotary Club in Canterbury. This club has worked with the town of Killingly in face to face surveys of local business. He shared that Business Forums should be held in April and that global economics are becoming very important in this work. Important things to pay attention to are the speakers you invite and the time of year you hold a forum. Your speakers need to speak about solutions to problems, not issues. Follow-ups to these forums did not work for Canterbury, but brain think tanks did. He suggested maybe hold a brain think tank to discuss the business park that will be coming to Thompson. Breakfast meetings work fairly well, along with a notice in the paper and calls to companies to encourage them to get involved. If you hold a meeting at the end of the day make sure the speaker is great and hold the liquor until after the speaker finishes. Be sure when you put on a trade show you do not mimic what your area Chambers of Commerce are doing. Canterbury has had an EDC Commission for 15 years and our speaker has been involved for the last three years. The EDC is now combining their work with local Old Home Days. The major stumbling block over the years has always been political. The Canterbury EDC is very interested in preservation and they do have a budget. They do all of the ribbon cuttings in town and look into picking up on the history behind every business. At open houses for local business the EDC provides the refreshments and brochure handouts. They do put out a quarterly newsletter. Two big issues that keep resurfacing are health insurance and energy. Mr. Tillinghast extended an invitation to all to come to one of their meetings which are held on the last Tuesday of every month.

Old Business: Kevin Kennedy continues to create a list of businesses that are not on the first list. He plans to do another mailing. He would like to have EDC members help with plan B listings and on-going process to reach businesses.

Beverly Kennedy volunteered to chair a sub-committee to work on a mission statement for the EDC. Alan Pratt and David DaVia will join her on this committee. Beverly shared that there are four components of a mission statement. They are:

- 1-Desired Outcome
- 2-Action “how to accomplish”
- 3-To whom are you addressing your work
- 4-Geographic catchment area



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David will check with Shawn in regard to the meeting of the Commission at River Mill.

Kevin shared that there is a new person at the Villager Paper and information on our meetings will be submitted to this person in the hope that it will make a difference. It was suggested that it would help to enter a meeting time and place on the web site.

New Business:

Members present discussed the possibility of a reduced recycle permit fee for Thompson taxpayer-owned commercial hauling companies. The current cost is set at \$400 per year. The Commission asked Kevin to look into other licensing fees in town that effect home-based businesses. Trade show committee will be placed on agenda for next meeting as JoAnn Hall was unable to be present,

Summary of Action items for next meeting:

- Trade Show
 - June River Mill industrial park meeting and tour
 - Report from Mission Statement Committee
 - Publishing of meeting times and dates in paper and on web
 - Fees business owners pay
 - Possibility of securing a grant to do survey of local business
- Meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Hoyt, Clerk**

NEXT MEETING, WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2008, 7PM, SENEY ROOM – TOWN HALL