



TOWN of THOMPSON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Economic Development Commission Minutes

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Via ZOOM 6:30 P.M.

- I. Call to Order was by Chair Brian Yacino at 6:32pm.
Present: Brian Yacino (Chair), Tyra Penn-Gesek (Planner), JoAnn Hall, Brian Santos, Brian Loffredo, H. Charles Obert, Ashley Pomes (Recording Secretary)
Others Present: Renee Waldron, Renee Fitzgerald, Charlene Langlois
- II. Approval of Minutes from October 21, 2020 – **A motion is made by J. Hall, seconded by C. Obert, to approve the October minutes. All in favor.**
- III. Reports
 1. Chairman – B. Yacino says he has been looking at other EDC's in the area, specifically in smaller towns that are similar to Thompson. He states there are quite a few groups who are not meeting regularly and thanks everyone for the work they have been doing. T. Penn-Gesek mentions she has a good relationship with the EDC Director of Windham Jim Bellano, and also Delpha Very, the Director of Putnam EDC. R. Waldron suggests a more formalized program around welcoming new businesses in town and there was also a brief discussion about Small Business Saturday.
 2. Treasurer – Per Treasurer J. Hall, the Commission has an available budget of \$21,598.71.
- IV. Update on Businesses in Town – Two new businesses have opened up, Sherry Mountford, EA, tax and accounting services, at 22 Woodstock Ave West and Beam Concrete Construction opened at 1168 Riverside Drive. There was also talk about Quest Martial Arts moving to town and Building Blocks Day Care has reopened with a new owner.
- V. Citizen's Comments Pertaining to Agenda Items - None
- VI. Old Business
 1. EDC membership and alternates – John Sharpe has officially resigned. R. Waldron has updated the website to have the members listed correctly. Brian Loffredo will be moved up as a regular member, it will be brought up at the December Selectmen's meeting. Brian Santos and Brian Yacino are up for renewal in December as well. Brian Loffredo will be taking John Sharpe's spot which is good until next December. Renee Fitzgerald is listening in on the meeting, she is possibly interested in an alternate position on the EDC. **A motion is made by B. Yacino, seconded by C. Obert, to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Brian Loffredo move from an alternate member to a full member. All in favor.**

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VII. New Business

1. Website notes – Renee Waldron updated the EDC members on the webpage. B. Yacino suggests if anyone ever sees anything on the website that needs to be changed or updated, send an email and he will put it on the agenda to discuss.
2. Discussion RE: income line item for EDC – There is discussion about how this will be handled, if it will be similar to what REC has as a revolving account. It is determined there would need to be a protected, restricted account for money coming in for self-sustaining programs, not Town money. T. Penn-Gesek will ask Orla to join the EDC meeting in December to discuss this further.

VIII. Progress Reports:

1. CCGP (Connecticut Community Connectivity Grant Program) - funding for infrastructure improvement projects. Draft due 10-16-20 – The grant was submitted on time, T. Penn-Gesek believes the notifications will come in before the end of the calendar year.
2. Marketing and branding plan with Sullivan & LeShane – R. Waldron shared a PowerPoint draft, going over messages, taglines, a style guide showing fonts/designs, sign ideas, next steps to launch brand, letterhead samples and email signatures.
3. Train Wreck Site - Thompson Community Design Workshop – November 10 – About 30 participants took part in the workshop, the majority either lived in Thompson or were already involved in the project. There are talks of a possible follow up workshop in the spring. T. Penn- Gesek is working towards another series of grants to get funding to move forward, there are three grants in view right now.
4. ERTD status - Airline Trail Z-card brochure – authorize expense – A vote to authorize \$3,000 to cover the brochures, this money was held aside to be used to pay for this project. It will be coming out of a grant remittance fund; some money was reimbursed by TLGV and Eastern Connecticut Association of Realtors. It is to be paid to Connecticut RC&D acting as the fiduciary agent, there is enough funds to cover this full cost. **Motion made by C. Obert, seconded by B. Santos, to take funds just referred to and allocate them for the Z fold Chamber of Commerce map. All in favor.** Each town will have their own set of brochures, ERTD funds all go towards the design, each municipality that gives in, those dollars go towards the production of the brochures, for \$3,000 you will get 6,000 brochures.
5. 6-month project to update the PoCD – EDC working group discussion – suggest action steps to close the EDC section – T. Penn-Gesek says the last thing needed is suggested action steps for the next 10 years, some have been listed already, new ideas include; formalization of the pop-up village, overall support for downtown area with mill development, proper promotion and marketing of the new planning and zoning regulations, review the zoning regulations on an annual basis, annual review of the webpage, order of action for 65 Main Street, annual review of open space available.
6. CME Wayfinding Plan & Signage (IOBY) – grant submitted - \$157,000 was asked for, once the last invoice from CHA is in and it is paid out of IOBY funds, whatever is left will then be encumbered towards the Town Hall Electronic Sign.
7. 65 Main Street building: asked for \$25k – State Farm Community grant – T. Penn-Gesek says that grant was rejected yesterday, she says they will regroup and look for the next opportunity. B. Santos and Sean Copeland have worked up a new estimate. T. Penn-

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Gesek and B. Santos will meet up and will walk through the estimate line by line to get a better idea of how to strategize completing the work.

8. 929 Mill update – There will be an informal presentation at the P&Z meeting this Monday. There is a sketch of inside of the building and a summary of which uses are intended for inside of the building. Need to figure out what level of review is needed from the Commission and a proper order of action. B. Yacino notes he heard construction was postponed until 2022. T. Penn-Gesek says yes, that is partly due to Covid and partly due to the main financier being HUD, everything is very slow in that process.

IX. Comments by Commission Members – B. Santos, talked about the formalized program for new businesses that R. Waldron mentioned, he asks is EDC using the welcome letter? B. Yacino says it hasn't been used in the last few months. B. Santos also mentions the Building Committee is highly interested in investigating replacing the school track. It is so broken it cannot be used for any formalized events, so they are looking into replacing it and keeping it in its current location. Lastly, he mentions P&Z regulations, he doesn't know how to promote or market that, but he is hoping others will be looking into how to do that, maybe one way is meeting with other EDC Chairs as B. Yacino mentioned. C. Obert mentions for B. Santos to add the tennis court to the proposal for the Building Committee while looking at the track. C. Obert also talks about inviting neighboring EDC's to join this EDC groups Zoom meetings to have discussions, B. Yacino says that is something to look into possibly a few months down the road. T. Penn-Gesek says she dialed into a land use webinar last week for an organization called desegregate CT. Everyone needs to know what was just done with the Thompson Zoning regulations, without having this as a specific goal, it is hitting every single one of the best practices that land use professionals all over the state and the country are recommending. T. Penn-Gesek says there is a lot coming out of this town that is very forward thinking, don't be afraid to be leaders in this field as volunteers.

X. Next Meeting: December 16, 2020: 6:30 pm, via Zoom

XI. Adjourn – The meeting is adjourned at 8:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Pomes

<<ZOOM RECORDING>>

Topic: Economic Development Commission

Date: Nov 18, 2020 06:19 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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