



TOWN of THOMPSON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**Economic Development Commission
Branding Implementation Committee
Special Meeting
Wednesday, March 14, 2018
MINUTES**

RECEIVED
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Linda Paradise
TOWN CLERK ASST.

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PRESENT: H. C. Obert
T. Penn-Gesek
R. Boisvert
C. Langlois
K. Herbert
R. Blackmer
B. Loffredo
R. Waldron

ABSENT: R. Rooney
R. Mann
J. Lindley
N. Patel

ALSO PRESENT: K. Beausoleil, First Selectman, Ex-Officio Member; M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development, Ex-Officio Member; Dotti Durst, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

H. C. Obert, representing the Economic Development Commission, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. Election of Officers:

1. Chairman

H. C. Obert nominated T. Penn-Gesek, seconded by R. Blackmer;
B. Loffredo nominated R. Waldron, seconded by T. Penn-Gesek.

There were no further nominations.

By vote, R. Waldron was elected Chairman.

2. Vice-Chairman

B. Loffredo nominated C. Langlois, seconded by T. Penn-Gesek.
There were no further nominations; C. Langlois was elected Vice-Chairman.

M. Chinatti noted for the record that a quorum of the Committee is 6. If the ex officio members are asked to vote, the quorum is 7.

III. New business:

a) Establish Meeting Schedule

(M/S/C Obert/Loffredo) that the Committee shall meet monthly on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM. Carried unanimously.

Discussion resulted in a consensus that the meetings will last approximately 1 ½ hours.

b). Review of DRAFT Branding Plan, Rev 8/7/17:

It was clarified that the purpose of this committee is to establish a Vision, a Mission for Thompson, using this Plan as a tool. Recommendations by this group will go to the EDC for consideration and implementation. This will include action items as well as a proposed timeline. Items which can be considered immediately, within the current budget year, could be proposed first.

M. A. Chinatti pointed out that the EDC has not yet accepted the Plan; review of the Plan itself by this group will precede that acceptance. The consensus was that it would be helpful if M. A. Chinatti lists specifics of the Plan the group should review, as in general, the members believe the Plan to be suitable. After discussion, the consensus was to table review of the plan until next month and look first at some implementation ideas as provided in the document BRANDING PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS, compiled from the Plan by M. A. Chinatti. She noted that some aspects of the Plan itself will require discussion, including basics such as possibly a different front cover. It was noted that the document, prepared by NECCOG, is in a format that precludes modification or notes. R. Waldron will look into this question.

1). Possible recommendations to the EDC for Plan Adoption.

Discussion points resulted in conceptual recommendations; each will be reviewed at the next meeting, clarified, and put forward formally to the EDC for consideration:

- Consider: Recommend that when the fiscal 19-20 budget is being prepared, the EDC proposes funding for hiring an Economic Development Director
- Consider: Recommend that WELCOME signs be developed and installed at all of the major points of entry to town
- Consider: Recommend to EDC that NECCOG draft of revised zoning regs regarding the RT 12/131 Corridor be moved to the forefront
- Consider: Recommending the website and Facebook page be as current as possible, with incremental additions and improvements as the Plan rolls out

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c). Strategy for Plan implementation:

Comments included:

- K. Herbert: creating a Vision and Mission Statement will be done before the EDC will adopt the Plan. Now is the time to begin to move forward.
- K. Beausoleil: an Economic Development Director would first need a product; the Plan, once approved, gives this person something to run with.
- C. Langlois: Planning and Zoning is looking at the Zoning Regulations mindful of possible revisions needed. The business community sees difficulties with them
- R. Blackmer: during the creation of the Plan, J. Filchak from NECCOG observed weaknesses in zoning and was expected to prepare comments for possible revisions. K. Beausoleil will follow up at NECCOG.
- M. A. Chinatti: Zoning Regulation changes should be implemented as soon as a section is revised and approved, rather than wait for the entire document to be reviewed.
- M. A. Chinatti: a grant application is being prepared to address brownfield concerns; if Thompson should receive the grant, some aspects that will dovetail with the work of this committee include a market analysis, traffic and pedestrian study, and others.
- M. Chinatti: Off-site Directional Signs (Business name and an arrow) are available to businesses, which can order them and pay a nominal fee.
- K. Beausoleil: the UCONN engineering group is working on a Main Street/RT 12 loop streetscape plan, which dovetails with concepts in the Plan.
- H. C. Obert: when we look at the website and facebook outreach, we need to establish more connectivity. Each town entity in isolation is less effective. Links are essential toward reaching the committee's goal.
- K. Beausoleil: committee members could look statewide to see how other communities utilize these media, what is posted, what the structure looks like.
- R. Waldron: noted that town hall staff took the facebook initiative. She reviewed how it is set up now, in its first week.
- H. C. Obert: the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) can be addressed by smaller groups of residents who can form a plan and move ahead.
- R. Boisvert: "Discover Putnam" seems to have over 2,000 users, C. Langlois will inquire of Delpha Very how that site is structured, and ask why Putnam has 2 sites (one a town info site).

IV. Correspondence: none

V. Member comments:

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 4 at 6:30 pm, Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall.

Chairman Waldron called upon the members to review for next meeting the draft list of the possible recommendations for the EDC which were discussed at this meeting.

She also called for further discussion and suggestions for the town website and the Facebook page, seeking improvements.

VI. Adjournment

(M/S/C Herbert/T. Penn-Gesek) to adjourn at 7:58PM. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

DorothyDurst

Dorothy Durst
Recording Secretary

These minutes have not yet been approved by the Branding Committee. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.

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