

Wilmington Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes –December 8, 2021

Members In Attendance: Cheryl Mitchell, Matt, Clark, John Guszowski, Mike D'Amato, Bill Rankin, Richard Maloney, members of the public

Meeting called to order at 6:33 PM.

Cheryl made a Motion to approve the minutes of November 10, 2021; Matt seconded; Motion carried

Old Business

Zoning Regulation Updates

1. Design Commercial Zone: Mike completed and has been approved effective December 1, 2021 and is all set and is working on incorporating the regulations but is on the books.
2. South Wilmington Village: Same thing the Planning & Zoning commission ultimately elected to expand the area so it was in keeping with what was originally identified as what was originally the historical district; matches the area approved; added an additional use of bed and breakfast; effective as of December 1st as well. They are in the process of retyping all of the regulations so that is a hyperlink document that will be user friendly. Will put the amendments up individually while they work to incorporate them into the new sections. Mike will send Rich the link as to where the amendments will be.
3. Special Development District: Rich looked around at a few towns in Connecticut; allows zoning to be flexible with their uses. Mike said looking at couple of the projects we have potentially in the hopper, they are unique in one way or another whether it be size or use of the parcel. Necessarily it doesn't make sense to change the zoning for a small number or parcels. The special development district provides flexibility to the developer in both the design and uses and also in the process. It is an incremental approach. The thought and goal would be to get a proposal to planning and zoning commission for a special district zone (a floating zone) so when some of these projects comes before the town the developer has some flexibility. Mike has put together a proposed process overview that he shared during the meeting.

Pre-application step process – Submission of special permit zone change application – public hearing – review of master plan (area of zone change & concept plan) – potential decision by Planning & Zoning (for review and approval) – get permit

John added as an FYI that after working on a couple of these and they are attractive to developers because of flexibility. Bill indicated this is a great idea and we are moving in the right direction. Mike indicated on the next steps there are 5 community projects in communication with varying uses and confidences; good if we could get this on the books for January. They would like to get a draft out to Planning & Zoning ASAP.

Rich made a Motion to Approve Special Development District presented by John and Mike; Bill seconded; Motion carried.

Mike will send a copy to our commission of the proposed draft.

Rich asked if any member of the public and there were none.

Railroad Project

Bill and Rich were out on a site this week; not quite the perfect geographical/topographical site. The vacant building and area next to Dunkin Donuts – Mike doesn't know if that area would support railroad. One is zoned resident and one is zoned commercial. The #335 parcel is quite small (about an acre); the #339 parcel is owned by Department of Transportation. There is an issue with sale storage ruined the well so the Department of Transportation. There has been inquiries by the state on the 3rd parcel owned by the Beckers (just under 2 acres); all abuts the current railway and is appropriate for a laydown area for railroad if land was combined. Bill thinks it may be an issue with the rail wanting to push ahead or back with multiple cars. Property would have to shut down 74 while doing so; about 430 feet to intersection. Industrial switch ad shutting down 74 would not work in Bill's opinion. Mr. Desiato is out of the country on vacation. He apologized and is very interested in continuing discussion. Bill sent an email to Matt at GWRR. He is selling 44 acres on Route 44 and had a drone video made and it was received well. He suggested a drone video for Mr. Desiato as a sign of good faith; Rich indicated his son as a drone license and could do it at no cost. Mr. Desiato will provide a contact person.

American Recovery Act

The town sent out a survey; proposing an ordinance to go to town meeting. A member of the EDC will reside on ARA committee to disburse funds. Rich asked if either Cheryl or Samantha would be interested. Cheryl will send an email to Samantha as she had expressed previous interest in this program. If she is unable or unwilling to do it, Cheryl offered.

CEDAS Certification

John had to leave for a meeting at 7. Rachael Burstein on call is working with Mike and John – most of the applications are in draft form. Process is going quickly. There are currently 35 criteria. Rachael indicating there may be like 2 or 3 items that may be difficult to answer prior to January. Bill asked what success has there been in other towns for CEDAS certification? Bill likes the certification process. Mike indicated that is a lot about numbers but what is good is

that someone has already figured out what is successful and healthy environment for economic development; sees as our goals is most useful to Mike. Bill is interested in working on this certification process

NEW BUSINESS

Willington Business List: Rich reviewed and indicated he had not been updated in a few years; updated email/phone and contact them. This will be done off-line. Cheryl and Matt will assist with Rich. Mike indicated that the list was updated in April of 2020 and shows there are 116 business entries. (names/phone/emails) Rich will follow up with Mike and will get back to Cheryl, Matt and Sam for any additional work needed. Could put an outreach article in Willington Wire. Rich will add in to quarterly report for Willington Wire.

Rich asked if Wednesdays (2nd of the month at 6:30 PM) work for 2022 meetings, and it was agreed to. Mike will do the notice to Robin on the schedule.

CIP Requests: No capital funds are needed for EDC. Rich has spoken to business and folks in town on what would tax abatement do? He thinks in speaking with others it is project specific – open to tax abatements (maybe a graduated approach). Mike already spoke with Erika regarding this because building here is expensive with businesses having to pay for their own well and septic. The tax abatement would be good to defer some of this cost. Mike suspects that it would have to go to town meeting. (can be tricky) We would have to create an ordinance to avoid town meeting, so the entity could approve the abatement. Mike will look into it further. CIP meeting at the beginning of January – go to Selectmen's office directly for tax abatement. We will keep this on our agenda and keep working on it

Bill made a Motion to Adjourn at 7:35; Matt seconded; Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Cheryl Mitchell

Economic Development Commission

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