



Economic Development Commission

SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, July 26, 2023 | 6:30p.m.

This Meeting was held at Willington Town Hall, Lower Level.
40 Old Farms Rd and via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Interim Chairman Matt Clark called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. In attendance for the meeting were members Bill Rankin and Cheryl Mitchell.

Also in attendance were Economic Development Consultant John Guskowski and Land Use Agent Mike D'Amato.

II. Public Participation

There were no members of the public that wished to speak.

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. June 21, 2023 – **Motion to approve minutes of June 21, 2023 by Cheryl Mitchell, seconded by Bill Rankin. Motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Commission Business

- a. **Willington Signage: Review Proposed Sign Locations and Bid Submissions**
Mike D'Amato presented the proposed "Welcome to Willington" signage that was prepared by one of the vendors. The solicitation was provided to three vendors per the Town procurement policy. One bidder did not respond, another withdrew, and the third prepared a rendering. He stated that the EDC had \$2500 from FY 2022-23 roll into the new fiscal year, so the proposed cost would be able to be covered for two signs. The Commission discussed the colors and surface and cost differential for gold paint vs. gold leaf. Matt Clark suggested establishing a cost not to exceed and leave it to the sign manufacturer about the most appropriate materials. Mike

D'Amato pointed out the detail of the post finials that were spools of thread, reflecting the Town's history. Matt Clark determined the consensus of the Commission was that the proposed signage design was acceptable, and that the designer would be given a cost not-to-exceed for the fabrication and installation of two signs. **Motion to approve bid as submitted for the installation of two signs at a cost not to exceed \$4800 by Bill Rankin, seconded by Cheryl Mitchell.**
Motion carried unanimously.

Mike D'Amato discussed potential placement locations, which included the corner of the Dollar General lot across from Phelps Crossing that could be placed within Town or private right-of-way and facing traffic on Route 74 coming from Tolland. A second location would be in South Willington, across the street from the American Eagle Saloon on a currently vacant lot. The Town has worked with this private owner in the past, and it had good sight lines from Mansfield. The third option would be along Route 74 coming from Ashford alongside the road just before Tox Environmental.

The Commission discussed their preferences. There was unanimity that the location by the Dollar General was the top preference, and the South Willington location was the second choice. Matt Clark suggested discussing this with the signage contractor to confirm the wisdom of these locations. Mike D'Amato discussed next steps and having Town staff discussing options with the property owners and placing some preliminary stakes on the properties.

b. Business Outreach/Interviews: Update

Matt Clark stated that he conducted outreach to his list of contacts, and had one follow-up conversation planned. Bill Rankin stated that he had two conversations with business owners. The businesses were concerned that input from respondents would be kept confidential. John Guskowski stated that town staff would have to make public anything provided to the town and requested. If interviewers from EDC took notes but did not identify the subjects, that information would not be available. Matt Clark requested that Commissioners continue to reach out to business owners for future input.

c. Upcoming Meeting Date: 8/23

The Commissioners discussed their availability for this date. This will be tentative, and depending on signage progress or Strategic Plan proposals, the Commission will formalize a date.

V. Reports/Correspondence

a. Strategic Plan RFP Status

John Guskowski reviewed the bid status, which was posted at the beginning of July with responses due on July 31. He reviewed the Q&A, which received questions from three different consulting teams. They hope to receive multiple proposals on the 31st.

Matt Clark discussed his informal presentation to the Planning & Zoning Commission about this RFP and the potential involvement of PZC in the interview process as well as input when the project went underway. He will also look to present to the Board of Selectmen at an upcoming meeting. Mike D'Amato stated that the ARPA Committee had also reviewed the RFP.

VI. Public Participation

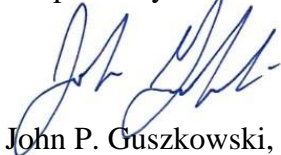
Matt Clark stated that he discovered a Willington business outreach group on Facebook, and stated that he would be contacting them.

Christine Sofas from Jared Sparks Road stated that she very much liked the signage design and was excited to see them be installed.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Bill Rankin, seconded by Cheryl Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John P. Guskowski, AICP, CZEO
Economic Development Consultant