

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Special Meeting – December 28, 2020

3:00pm via Zoom and Call-In

PRESENT: Val Dumais, Nancy Autunno, Mark Chase, Marc Romanow, Tim Maynard, Helen Bergenty (via phone), Joseph Klepacki (via phone)

STAFF: Cal Hauburger - Economic Development Coordinator, Matt Daskal – Asst. Town Manager

ABSENT: Robert Berube, Amber Viteri – Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Patrick McMahon – CT Main Street Center, Jacob Rocco – Town Council Liaison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Val Dumais at 3:04pm.

II. Oral Petitions

None.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 20, 2020 meeting minutes by Joseph Klepacki. Mark Chase interjected and wanted to make note of the switch of spelling of both his name and Marc Romanow's. Cal Hauburger made a note of the necessary changes.

Joseph Klepacki motioned to approve the February 20, 2020 minutes with Mark Chase's correction. The motion was seconded by Mark Chase and passed 7-0.

IV. New Business

1. Introduction of Patrick McMahon

Patrick McMahon, CEO of CT Main Street Center, gave a brief overview of his organization and their offerings at the request of Cal Hauburger. Mr. McMahon noted the beneficial, four-pronged approach CT Main Street Center takes when assisting Connecticut municipalities redevelop their downtowns and create a sense of place. Along with their one-on-one consultations with municipalities, CT Main Street Center also hosts a number of networking and professional development opportunities throughout the year for town staff, economic development agency members, chambers of commerce and others.

Cal Hauburger noted that Patrick and CT Main Street have been of great assistance to him as he transitioned into his new position of Economic Development Coordinator and that he will be submitting a budget request for the Town to become a member of the organization noting the benefit specifically to whichever redevelopment scenario of White Oak the Council chooses, and the continued redevelopment efforts of the downtown as a whole. Mark Chase noted the Town's previous interaction with CT Main Street Center in his efforts on the Downtown Redevelopment Group and commented on their great assistance.

2. Discussion of Submissions to RFQ 2020-15: White Oak Redevelopment

Cal Hauburger gave a brief overview of the White Oak project ranging from the Town's initial Access and Option Agreement to completing a full environmental site assessment, their efforts over the summer in soliciting developers, and finally the Council's efforts in doing due diligence and research prior to selecting a developer for the property. Additionally, Cal Hauburger gave an overview of the draft copy of a developer proposal analysis report being conducted by Loureiro Engineering after being retained by the Town Council. Following a meeting with Town Staff, an updated report will be presented later in the week and passed on to EDA members. Per the Council's request, the goal of the Special Meeting was to have an open discussion among EDA members regarding the two redevelopment proposals, selecting one, and forming a memo of support of that redevelopment scenario to the Council.

Val Dumais led the discussion among present EDA members giving each the chance to speak and share. Following discussion, there was consensus support by the EDA for the Manafort Brothers mixed-use redevelopment proposal noting the alignment with goals laid out in the 2019 PoCD, better meeting a decades-long effort to revitalize the downtown, the possibility of integrating the Farmington Canal bike trail, providing access to the Pequabuck River, increased tax revenue, and the opportunity for more small businesses to locate downtown.

It is to be noted that Marc Romanow shared concerns about the feasibility of such a large-scale project, specifically the number of apartment units, and Helen Bergenty wished the proposed purchase price was greater. Val Dumais noted that even if the site didn't fully reach the proposed redevelopment it would still serve the Town better than another construction site, specifically in the downtown area, with the potential benefits outweighing the risks. Multi-family housing in Town has a strong track record and Manafort has had a successful track record in Town. All members are in support of Manafort completing an in-depth traffic study as required by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Following discussion and group support of the Manafort Brothers proposal, Cal Hauburger will draft a memo of support on behalf of the EDA to the Town Council for their next meeting on January 4, 2021. A copy will be shared with EDA members.

3. 2021 Meeting Dates

Nancy Autunno motioned to approve the 2021 EDA meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Helen Bergenty and passed 7-0.

V. Adjournment

Joseph Klepacki motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:57pm. The motion was seconded by Mark Chase and passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cal Hauburger
Economic Development Coordinator