

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
June 27, 2022 Special Meeting**

Minutes

A meeting of the East Granby Economic Development Commission was held on Monday, June 27, 2022. Members present when Chairman Paul Thulen called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM were Kerry Flaherty, Tom Lally, Paul Oliva, Todd Zessin, and Alternate Dan Barrett. Member Oliver Davis arrived at 5:48 PM.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Kerry Flaherty and seconded by Paul Oliva to approve the minutes of April 25, 2022. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

- EDC Meeting Notes for May 2022
- EDC Report
- Austin Gelinias E-Mail

Resident Paul Calebaugh was in attendance to follow up on his request for copies of the Fire Department Study survey responses. He was redirected to the First Selectwoman's office as that study was not commissioned by the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Calebaugh also expressed his interest in participating as a member of the public in the upcoming Village Center Concept Master Plan workshops, and then further reiterated his position that the Town needs to increase funding for the Fire Department.

Resident Andrea Terney of Sanford Ridge also attended the meeting to stay current with any updates regarding the Silverman project.

Sandra Johnson arrived at 5:43 PM.

Paul Thulen commented on the excellent presentation package that resident Austin Gelinias submitted to the Commission. Mr. Thulen will send Mr. Gelinias a thank you letter for his work and invite him to participate in the public workshops for the Village Center Concept Master Plan.

Oliver Davis arrived at 5:48 PM.

Although renovation costs are mostly likely prohibitive, discussion followed about potential uses for the residential property behind the firehouse in the center of town, including offices for the Board of Education and a residence for student firefighters.

DISCUSSION WITH PUBLIC AND/OR APPLICANT

There was no further public input.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Sandra Johnson reviewed her Economic Development Report. See Brokers/Realtors & Available Sites/Buildings.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Brokers/Realtors & Available Sites/Buildings:

- 13 Nicholson Road is still moving along for multi-family housing. Ms. Johnson provided the owner with MDC contacts. Kerry Flaherty expressed concerns about municipal water pressure throughout town.
- Silverman Project is waiting for plans and will present to the Inland Wetlands Commission when ready.
- 2 Gateway Boulevard has been working with a traffic engineer. The building currently houses medical billing offices. Ms. Johnson has introduced the owner to the head of Hartford Hospital's real estate division as the site is well-suited for a medical facility. It was suggested this would be a good location for a renal/dialysis center or medical imaging as there is already electrical redundancy on site. Board of Education offices would be a leasing option for the town at this location.
- Infrastructure may be a concern for the Russell Road parcels, along with the gas pipeline that runs through the middle of the location.
- Regarding the Monrovia property, INDUS is currently divesting most of their Connecticut properties as there is no market for them right now. The new owners are investors in New York that develop solar farms. Monrovia's lease is still active for several more years.

B. Village Center Concept Master Plan: The Village Center Concept Master Plan was sent to Committee members by Paul Thulen. In consultation with First Selectwoman Eden Wimpfheimer and Town Planner Robin Newton, the next step is to seek the involvement of the Planning and Zoning Commission by submitting it to them for their comments at their next meeting. It was recommended that a member of Planning and Zoning and perhaps someone from the Town's emergency services join the committee to evaluate consultants.

The procedure will be to issue the RFP once finalized and evaluate the consultants, identify specific stakeholders who need to be involved in the workshops, and evaluate and accept a Village Center Concept Master Plan. As mentioned, the panel of approximately six individuals to manage this process should include the Town Planner, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Economic Development Commission, one of the Board of Selectmen, etc. It was suggested that someone from outside of the Town who has familiarity with the process also be included on the panel. Suggestions included someone like Cynthia van Zelm from Storrs Center, someone from Windsor Locks, someone from Council of Governments, Abby Kenyon from Granby, or an individual from CRDA.

Kerry Flaherty suggested that the RFP should strongly emphasize that invited consultants will have to present their qualifications to the panel. Sandra Johnson's editing will also be incorporated into the finalized RFP. It was confirmed that the RFP has been reviewed by the Town Attorney.

A motion was made by Paul Oliva and seconded by Kerry Flaherty to accept the final draft Village Center Concept Master Plan RFP for submission to the East Granby Planning and Zoning Commission for their comments. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Business Visitation and Retention: Paul Oliva has visited the new Spoonville Mart and Deli and has interviewed the new owners. He was granted permission by the administrator of the East Granby Community Facebook page to post a photo and brief information about the new business. The establishment features a convenience store and makes fresh sandwiches and they are applying to become a lottery sales agent. Mr. Oliva will write an article about them for the next edition of "Let's Talk Turkey" in August.

D. Marketing Articles: No discussion.

E. Incentives and Regulation Changes; Façade Improvement: No discussion.

F. Cannabis Workshop: Paul Oliva reported that he was disappointed in the low public attendance at the recent Cannabis Workshop held by the Planning and Zoning Commission. No presentation to describe the different options being considered was given, although a written survey was distributed. Todd Zessin commented that after the workshop, the survey was posted on the Town website so that non-attendees could also submit their comments, which resulted in much greater participation. Mr. Zessin has tabulated the surveys and will be submitting a report to the Planning and Zoning Commission, which he will also submit to Paul Thulen for the Economic Development Commission.

G. EDC Meeting Date/Location Change: Paul Thulen noted the difficulty in having meetings in the large hearing room at Town Hall due to the Board of Education's use of the room for subcommittee meetings prior to their 7:00 PM Monday meetings. Mr. Thulen intends to contact the Chair of the Board of Education to see if their subcommittees could use the smaller meeting room instead to free up the larger room for 5:30 PM meetings of the EDC, which could then be held in hybrid format. He noted that the Senior/Community Center also has hybrid capabilities and may be a possible location for meetings. Until a hybrid meeting can be held, Mr. Thulen intends to include a Google Meet invitation on the agendas so that Commission members can join in the meeting that way if they are unable to attend in person.

H. EGFD Study: Kerry Flaherty announced that the public presentation for the East Granby Fire Department Study will be held this Wednesday, June 29th at 5:30 PM at Town Hall. The presentation will be given by the consultant. He identified a key challenge for the Department as identified in the study—that not only is the average age of the Volunteer Fire Department increasing, but the average age of the citizens of East Granby is rising as well. It was suggested that the new housing developments coming to town may help to bring younger people to town and perhaps serve as a source for potential new members.

Mr. Flaherty outlined the process involved for the Fire Department study. The study went out for RFP and the committee identified eight potential companies to make sure that they were aware of the bid. Of those eight, four completed proposals were received. Three were timely and one was received after the specified due date. The next step in the process was for the committee to develop ten questions for the potential consultants and the three on-time respondents were then interviewed via Zoom. The consultant was selected based on their interview scores, their credentials, and their experience with smaller communities the size of East Granby. Mr. Flaherty will share his list of interview questions and selection criteria with Mr. Thulen for the Commission's review.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Kerry Flaherty and seconded by Paul Oliva at 7:10 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall
Building and Land Use Administrative Assistant