

ENFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**MINUTES**

Thursday, February 17, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

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**Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**Roll Call**

Chairman Turner took the roll and present were Commissioners John Santanella, Philip Kober, Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, Mary Ann Turner, Richard Stroiney and Steven Ragnouth. Absent were Commissioners Kelly Davis, Marilynn Cressotti and Virginia Higley.

Also present were Laurie Whitten, Director of Development Services and Nelson Tereso, Deputy Director of Economic & Community Development.

**Approval of Minutes**

- a. September 16, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**Motion:** Commissioner Stroiney made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kober, to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2021 Regular Meeting.

The motion passed with a 4-0-2 vote.

**Votes: 4-0-2**

**Special Guest – Welcome to new member Steven Ragnouth**

The EDC welcomed Steven Ragnouth as a new member of the EDC. Steven, who is a life long resident of Enfield and owner of Stevie's Little Store on Route 5, provided a background of himself to the EDC.

**Invite a local business guest – None.** Mr. Tereso will be inviting the owner (Tom Crochiere) of 21 Manning Road to discuss his renovation project. He is in the process of renovating and in marketing your property to future tenants.

Chairman Turner suggested that moving forward that we move our meetings from monthly to quarterly due the lack of tasks. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall had reservations on moving meetings to quarterly since she felt over time this commission would eventually disappear. Mr. Tereso suggested to keep the meetings monthly for now and we can always just cancel monthly meetings due to lack of business.

Mr. Tereso had indicated that based on his discussions with the Town Manager's Office, the Town is looking into the possibility of having the EDC serve as an advisory commission of the Town Council for the review of tax abatement applications. Chairman Turner suggested that Mr. Tereso organize a meeting between the Chairman Turner and the acting Town Manager to vet this out a little more before the EDC proceeds in taking on this role. Commissioner Stroiney suggested that he also be involved due to his role as a member on the TIF Advisory Committee. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall did express reservations on the commissioners of the EDC lack of expertise in negotiating tax abatements.

Chairman Santanella complemented the TIF Advisory Committee's recent involvement in reviewing their first Credit Enhancement Agreement and agreed that utilizing the EDC in this role could potentially benefit the Town. Chairman Turner then asked what the current process is in approving tax abatements in which Mr. Tereso provided an explanation but did indicate that improvements to the process are recommended. Commissioner Stroiney suggested that if the mission is to update the tax abatement guidelines, evaluate future tax abatement applications, and make recommendations, then the EDC can be empowered to make a difference in improving this process. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall indicated that the Plan of Conservation & Development and zoning regulations should be the key to approving developments that trigger applications for tax abatements. The EDC then had a long discussion about the Winstanley North Maple Street Development Tax Abatement denial that took place on the first town council meeting in February.

### **Report From Development Services**

Mr. Tereso provided the Commission with an update on the environmental assessment work being performed at the Strand Theater. Mr. Tereso will be going in front of Town Council for a bid waiver for the environmental services needed at the Lamagna Center so that the demolition of the Strand Theater and Lamagna Center can be demolished as one project. Mr. Tereso also updated the EDC on the status of a Request for Developer Qualifications and Proposals for the redevelopment of the Strand theater and Lamagna Center properties that he is working on.

### **Liaison Reports**

Commissioner Stroiney indicated that the TIF Advisory met with their first TIF Credit Enhancement Applicant today and the meeting was very productive, They plan on making a final recommendation to the Town Council this month.

Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall stated that the Agricultural Commission is hosting a presentation by Joan Nichols of the CT Farm Bureau at the Enfield Annex at 6:30 pm on 3/2/22 to explain the details of Public Act 63-490, an act concerning the taxation and preservation of farm, forest or open space, commonly referred to as "PA 490". Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall also mentioned that the Conservation Commission worked with the Office of Community Development on a Urban Forestry Climate Change Grant Application to apply for a grant for 21 trees to be planted in Thompsonville along High Street and Central Street.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Kober made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.