



TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
Economic & Community Development Department
2750 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06518

Erik Johnson
Interim Director

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Meeting ID: 988 3665 7909

PW: revenue

Call in: 1 646-558-8656

MINUTES: The Economic Development Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Sachetti, Mr. DelGrego, Mr. Good, Mr. Watkins, Mr. Smolnik, Mr. Moses, Mr. Hughey, Mr. DeNicola, Ms. Sacco, Mr. Rolnick

Commissioners Excused: Mr. Diaz

Commissioners Absent:

Others in Attendance: Acting Town Planner/Economic Development Director Mr. Johnson, Energy Efficiency Coordinator Ms. Schomaker, SCSU Student Ms. Campbell, Acting Clerk Ms. Barletta, Dale Kroop, Former Economic Development Director, Sarah Clark, Nora Grace-Flood

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. Review Minutes of May 11, 2021

Tony DelGrego moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Good seconded, and all were in favor. Mr. Moses abstained.

3. Hamden Incubator Sale – Dale Kroop

Dale Kroop, former director of Economic Development, addressed the commission. Mr. Kroop then gave an update on the incubator and its sale. The Hamden Economic Development Corporation, the structural consent program, was started to help with foundational and drainage problems in the Newhall area. There were 85 applications, and Mr. Kroop stated that he is working with a community advisory group, and with Councilman Farmer. He added that a structural engineer was hired, and is waiting to put projects out to bid. Construction activity will begin in July or August. Mr. Kroop then added that he expanded it to Certified Land Bank, which will offer more protections. Mr. Kroop added that this works statewide, versus Hamden.

He then went through the incubator's history. Mr. Kroop reported that he had planned to lose money for the first few months, and then COVID-19 occurred, which destroyed the ability to get events and gain profit. He went to the SBA (Small Business Association) for an emergency loan, and received \$9,000. He added that the project came out great, and the tenants love the space. The deed restrictions have made it difficult to find an appropriate investor. He then through the process of the sale. The price was 127 million dollars, and the down payment was enough to pay off all remaining debts. Mr. Kroop remarked that he could not find a better buyer for the building. Mr. Sachetti asked about the PR about the benefits of the sales. Mr. Kroop answered that he has one prepared, but is letting the Mayor's Office choose when the release goes out. He also commented that the sale is bittersweet for him.

Mr. Moses asked about the program that has initiated. Mr. Kroop answered going back the remediation, under the consent order from the residential properties, and the two parks (Villano/Mill Rock), he approached Peter Villano about home owners whose homes are sinking into the ground. The Department got the grant, and in 2016, the DEP approached Mr. Kroop about doing additional remediation projects. That project is supposed to start later this year. He found out that they underspend on the residential properties, so Mr. Kroop pitched rather than give the money back into the state, do more structural repairs. He stated that 4 million dollars is left over from the state. Mr. Moses asked if this was administrative from the town. Mr. Kroop answered that it was already voted from the state bond commission. They don't sign contracts, but all of the police and the construction is neighborhood driven. There was a brief discussion.

4. Report of the Director

Mr. Johnson gave a brief presentation regarding on what he envisions the Planning and Development Department to be versus what it is today. He noted that the Economic Development Technician and the Housing and Special Business Specialist (which is a new position) are vacant. He went through the roles and responsibilities of both offices, and he hopes to add two positions to the department in the next year, which are principal planner and another assistant zoning

enforcement officer. He went through the priorities of the Planning and Zoning Department, which include: implementation of the Viewpoint Permitting Software, make recommended changes to ordinances, complete review and processing of private area lighting program, resolution of litigation, and purge, clean and organize. In terms of Economic Development, those goals are identify and hire staff for open positions, High Meadows project, former Hamden Middle site redevelopment, Quinnipiac University, to create and implement marketing campaign, and complete updates to Hamden's 3-year Economic Development plan. He then asked for feedback from the Commission.

Mr. Sachetti asked about the efforts to hire these new positions. Mr. Johnson believes that the Economic Development technician position is open and posted, and the Small Business and Housing position can be posted and filled on July 1, 2021. He needs to work on the job description. Mr. Sachetti asked what he does envision the individual doing in that role. Mr. Johnson answered that this is a hybrid role, and some project management work. Mr. Sachetti pointed out that the commission provided feedback on the job description of the Economic Director position, and there are some elements that can be incorporated from that rule. Mr. Johnson would love it, and waiting for affirmation from Personnel, and tried not to move until resources have been formally committed. Mr. Johnson then demonstrated a timeline of department projects. Mr. Sachetti noted the website changes and there was a sub-committee and Mr. Good has administrative rights on the website. Mr. Moses stated that this clearly demonstrates a productive goal which will benefit the town.

Mr. Johnson added that he wants to be transparent and wants to get things done. He stated that this custodial role while they build capacity, and would be looking for the Commission to advocate that to the Mayor's Office.

Mr. Johnson then noted that he is getting up to speed with Mather Street Development, and the final disposition, and waiting for an execution from them, and is waiting for the certified payroll form.

5. Project Updates, Grand Openings, etc.

There were none.

6. Hamden Middle School Status Update

Mr. Johnson reported that this project was awarded to Mutual Housing a few years ago. This contract expires on July 22, 2021, and the town is confront with the decision to extend development rights for another year. Mr. Johnson added that this will need to be communicated to the Legislative Council, and he is meeting with Mutual Housing New Horizon on Wednesday June 9, 2021 for more details. Based on that, he'll make a recommendation. There is a lot of capital in the market and there should be a lot of people interested.

Mr. Moses asked about the agreement. Mr. Johnson explained that it was an executed agreement that needs to be completed by July 21, 2021. He is not sure if they had the ability to meet the terms, which is why he wants to get an extension, and needs to get financial information. If they have not figured it out, he would let them come back and complete. Mr. Moses asked how old the contract was. Mr. Johnson said he thinks it is three years. Mr. Moses asked have they given a summary on

what they intent to do. Mr. Johnson answered that if they don't meet the terms, then the town has to make the recommendation to council, and the contract would be defunct. There was a brief discussion about the Town's contractual obligations about this project. If something gets communicated that is credible, Mr. Johnson said he will reach out to the Chair to call an emergency meeting and added that this is not at fault from the Town.

Mr. Delgrego asked if there was any way that these projects can generate tax revenue. Mr. Johnson answered that it depends on the project.

7. High Meadows Status Update

Mr. Johnson stated that the Town has had an agreement from the state, and at risk youth center at Hartford turnpike. There are 25-36 acres of property, and the purchase price is 1.8 million dollars from the State of Connecticut. The Town will need to acquire the property by June 30, 2022. State has the right to charge the town, and the cost can range \$100,000-\$150,000 a year, and the town has an obligation to pay 2 million for the property, and there was an RP that was issued, and was taken back, and the relation to timing.

Mr. Johnson said that the market study showed one of the proposed uses can be for a 55 and over community. He noted that the property is zoned as a R-4. He added that the Planning and Zoning Commission will need to upzone the parcel from R-4 to a T 3.5 to allow more uses. This site abuts a T 3.5 use. This will increase the value of the land. Mr. Johnson then went through the processes and the options of use.

Mr. Johnson stated about creating a path to get the best developer possible. There was a brief discussion. Mr. Johnson said that he wants to take the time to do it right, since it's clear that they got the deliverable, and the market produces and has the goal to get the maximum land value. In this scenario, it's the up zoned approach.

8. Old Businesses

There was no old business to discuss.

9. New Businesses:

Mr. Sachetti reminded Commissioners to attend the July meeting as the elections for vice-chair and chair will occur. He also asked Commissioners to come to the meeting with nominations as well.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Moses made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Ms. Sacco and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Natalie Barletta, Acting Commission Clerk

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