

Minutes of the Suffield Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
February 18, 2021

Meeting was a Zoom teleconference in accordance with the Connecticut
Freedom of Information Commission Advisory Opinion 41.
A recording of the meeting is on the Town Website

Members present: Susan Thorner, Brian Banak, Howard Orr, Jack Henrie, Bob Kelly, Gayle Demko

Also Present: Director of Planning & Development, Bill Hawkins, President Bradley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Leslie Marques, Suffield Residents, John McGuire, and Brielle Browne Walsh
Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns

1. Co-Chair Brian Banak called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

2. Minutes

Ms. Thorner moved to approve of the minutes of the January 21, 2021 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and unanimously approved.

3. Public Input

Ms. Walsh noted that she is now a board member of the North Central Chamber of Commerce and will communicate information from the chamber to the Commission as a Suffield representative.

4. Suffield Phased Reopening / Recovery Committee

Mr. Hawkins reported that the Town has set up a COVID-19 hotline for help with information and the number is 860-668-3344. He reported on the latest COVID vaccination statistics for Suffield residents. Mr. McGuire noted that the Town has been calling eligible citizens to offer assistance and information related to vaccination and mentioned how pleased he was that the town was taking this initiative. Mr. Hawkins stated that he has been sending out information about COVID related state and federal programs, seminars, and grants that are available to businesses in Town to keep them informed.

Mr. Banak noted that he will be working with Ms. Thorner and Mr. McGuire on a structured plan and framework for Commission members to reach out to businesses in Town. He mentioned they will come up with a list of standard questions so answers can be easily compared and quantified. This will all help the Commission keep in touch with the business community in Suffield to understand their needs during the pandemic and beyond. Members will be assigned a list of contacts and will be asked to report back with their findings.

5. Staff Report

Mr. Hawkins discussed the updated draft of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) that he has been working on with the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). This document is updated every ten years and serves as a framework for decisions that guide development of the Town. Chapter 6, which Mr. Hawkins sent out to the members for review, specifically addresses economic development. He reviewed the chapter with the Commission members and asked that they contact him with any suggestions or revisions. Mr. Banak suggested the POCD recommend making the town more pedestrian friendly around the town center village district. Specifically, there was discussion related to installing a sidewalk on the south side of Mountain Road from Remington Street to the commercial area on Mountain Road, which would connect people with Stony Brook Park.

Mr. Hawkins noted that he will be working with a consultant to review the town owned industrial land that is for sale to determine each lots' development potential. Currently the properties are listed with the AdvanceCT Site Finder and Costar. Also, he will ask the highway department to reinstall the advertising sign for the lots on South Street that was taken down last year due to deterioration. He also reviewed the progress on the sale of 100 Marketing Drive, which is due to close in March. An application for a proposed café at 66 North Main Street is on the Planning and Zoning Commission February 22nd meeting agenda. Mr. Banak reported that two of the condominium units at 200 Mountain Road are completed and on the market. The additional four and the commercial building on the property are still under construction. Mr. Hawkins also noted that the new garage at the Lily House is completed and the new ATM for Chase Bank has been installed in the parking lot of Suffield Village. Mr. Hawkins reported that he has received three responses to the request for proposals that he sent out for the Affordable Housing Plan.

Mr. McGuire noted the recent feature article in the Hartford Courant about Suffield restaurant owner and chef, Kevin Cousin of Toscas.

6. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Mr. Henrie moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 a.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Orr and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary