

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

Members present: Co-Chairperson Susan Thorner, Co-Chairperson, Brian Banak, Howard Orr, John McGuire, Jack Henrie

Also Present: Director of Planning & Development, Bill Hawkins, Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns

1. Co-Chair Susan Thorner called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM
2. Minutes

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

3. Public Input

Mr. Orr mentioned that he is hearing positive feedback about Suffield Village Market helping customers and supporting the community. The other members of the Commission mentioned they had heard the same and were pleased with the good news.

4. Business Contact Survey Update.

Mr. Hawkins shared the results of the online survey that was sent out to 203 businesses, was viewed by 82 recipients, opened by 24 individuals but only completed by nine. The survey is set to close November 19th and it was suggested that a follow-up email be sent out to try to get more responses. Members of the Commission also felt that face-to-face interviews with business owners would still be the most effective route to take. Mr. McGuire will meet with two other commission members to develop an action plan for interviews.

5. Town Center Update

Mr. Hawkins followed up on the discussion from last month regarding Ffyler Place. Laureno Enterprises LLC attended the October meeting and asked the EDC to support efforts to make Ffyler Place a town road. He explained that currently, Ffyler Place is a private road partially owned by the town and partially owned by Laureno Enterprises. If the road becomes public, it will allow the property owners with road frontage the ability to subdivide their property. Mr. Hawkins stated that he will pursue getting an estimate for improving the road including building a cul-de-sac. It was the consensus of the members present that the town should support efforts to make Ffyler Place a town road. With that in mind, Mr. Banak made a motion to propose that the Town consider paying for the improvements necessary to bring Ffyler Place up to town road standards with Laureno Enterprises reimbursing the Town for 50% when they sell the first lot. Mr. Orr seconded the motion

and all members voted in favor. They also discussed the railroad property that abuts the town's highway garage parcel. Mr. Hawkins also updated the commission members on the progress at 66 North Main Street. Cara Mia Med Spa has opened and work on the café and hair salon continues. Members also discussed the two local chambers of commerce, which are Bradley Regional and North Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce (NCCCC). It was suggested that the Town make the information for businesses to join both organizations available on the Town website. Mr. Hawkins will find out the cost to renew the membership to the Bradley Regional Chamber and how much a membership to the NCCCC would cost. He will also update the Commission on the Economic Development Department budget at the next meeting.

6. Light Industrial Update

Mr. Hawkins reported that C & S Wholesale Grocers will be closing their 660,000 SF warehouse in Suffield. There was discussion about the market for warehouses across the country and the possibility of successfully marketing the property if that is what C & S decides to do. Mr. Hawkins brought the Commission up to date on the Planning and Zoning Commission's work related to drafting a Cannabis Establishments zoning regulation for Suffield. He also mentioned the progress on the potential tax abatement for Linde Inc. as well as the new building that is being proposed for the United Gear property on East Street South, which recently received Conservation Commission approval. Mr. Hawkins noted that 50 & 80 Bennett Road have sold to RZ Smoke for storage and distribution purposes and that there has been recent interest in the Town owned properties on South Street. He mentioned that Rug Pad USA has received approval for the Bradley Airport Development Zone tax benefit. Commission members discussed the infrastructure bill and related funds that would be coming to the state from the federal government and how that might impact Suffield. It was suggested that Representative Tami Zawistowski be invited to the December meeting to lend her perspective on the bill.

7. Adjournment

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Mr. Orr moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 AM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henrie and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary