



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on **February 16, 2009** at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. Board Members present included Sara Volino, Brandt Heckert, Paula Silva, Fariba Goldberg, Karen Dionne and Nancy Blount. Ex Officio members Cheryl Silva, Caroline Wells and Alan Crisman were present as well as Town Council members Dave Frerichs, Cathie Tattrie and Frank Alfano. Planning Board members Andy Asselin and John Piepowski and the consultant for the Comprehensive Planning process, Sam Shamoon, were also in attendance. Board member Davison Bolster was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Review of Minutes from January 5, 2009

The Board reviewed the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 5th. Ms. Silva voted to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Blount. Ms. Volino, Mr. Heckert, Ms. Goldberg, Ms. Dionne, Ms. P. Silva and Ms. Blount.

2. Review and Comments for Town Council on the Code of Conduct

Mr. Frerichs stated that Town Council voted to get the proposed Code of Conduct resolution to all board and commission members for comments and feedback. This item is different from the Ethics Training on February 4th by the Rhode Island Ethics Commission. Ms. Wells distributed the proposed Code and asked that members provide comment in time for the March 10th Town Council meeting. She stated that she will try to email the handouts from the Ethics meeting for those who could not go.

3. Update on the Boards and Commission Budget

Ms. Wells stated that Town Council's Budget Workshop will take place on Saturday, March 7th at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Volino and Ms. Wells discussed the budget recommendation of \$1800.00 for the next fiscal year and Ms. Wells stated that these funds were primarily for any printing and mailing for the next year. Paula Silva asked if these funds would be sufficient for any advertising or other activities. Ms. Wells said that she did not think so, and if the committee wished to pursue more expensive activities, they may need to fundraise. Ms. Volino asked if the Board would have to approach Town Council if it needed more money. Ms. Wells stated that the Board would have to ask Town Council if it wanted the Town to cover additional costs. Ms. Volino encouraged Board members to attend the Budget Workshop.

4. Discussion on Diamond Hospitality Award

Paula Silva stated that the State of Rhode Island will receive the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences' International Star Diamond Award for its tourism efforts. Ms. Tattrie suggested looking at East Bay Tourism's new website. Mr. Asselin also suggested the

Tour Rhode Island event, where local tourists bus through towns to learn more about each location.

5. Report out on the Comprehensive Plan/Economic Development Subcommittees

Ms. Volino asked all the subcommittees to submit to Mr. Shamoan their notes from their various meetings. She listed the subcommittees:

- Economic Statistics
- Manufacturing, Industry and Technology
- Commerce, Retail, Restaurants and the Arts
- The Waterfront
- Tourism
- Government
- Agriculture

Ms. Volino asked Mr. Shamoan what time frame the subcommittees should have in completing their recommendations for the Economic Development Element. Mr. Shamoan suggested that mid-March would be an appropriate endpoint for the subcommittees, and that he hopes to complete the draft plan by early summer. In response to questions, Mr. Shamoan explained the legal importance of the Comprehensive Plan and its various impacts on economic development.

6. Discussion of Possibilities for Adaptive Reuse of Existing Buildings

Ms. Wells stated that the Town now has a number of vacant buildings, both publically and privately owned, and the Economic Development Board may wish to think of ways that it can work with the community to develop a reuse plan for these buildings, or work with private owners to encourage more creative uses. Current vacant buildings include the Main Street School, the Hankerchief Factory and the Armory. In addition, the National Grid property should involve some community input on its reuse. Mr. Bolster left a copy of sketches by Lombard Pozzi of the property from 1986. Ms. Tattie said that the American Tourister drawings also provide some good suggestions on configuring the property. Ms. Wells stated that she will try to schedule a site visit of the properties so that the Board can get a good idea of the spaces. Ms. Wells stated that she would also like to draft a protocol for the board when such properties arise.

7. Discussion of Brainstorm Session and Next Steps

Ms. Wells suggested that the Board keep developing their Action Plan by building on the January 5th Brainstorm session. Ms. Silva referred to an email from Noah Fulmer (FarmFresh RI) on how to develop a Farm-to-Table event for local restaurant owners and local farmers. Ms. Goldberg stated that she would like to be a part of that, or perhaps host it, but would not have time until April. Ms. Wells suggested that they look at early summer for such an event. This item will be discussed further at the March meeting.

With all business concluded, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Caroline Wells, February 16, 2009