



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 15, 2010** at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. Board Members present included Sara Volino, Paula Silva, Davison Bolster, Karen Dionne, Diane Horton, Brandt Heckert, and Linda Brunini. Ex Officio members Caroline Wells and Alan Crisman were present as well as Town Council members Cathie Tattrie, David Frerichs, and Frank Alfano. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB. Ms. Lisa Raiola and Mr. Waterman Brown were present to discuss the Kitchen Incubator proposal for Main Street School.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Discussion of Kitchen Incubator Proposal for Main Street School

Ms. Lisa Raiola presented the board with a Kitchen Incubator Proposal for the Main Street School. At this time, this proposal was the only response to the RFP for the Main Street School. Ms. Raiola asked the Board for feedback before she presents her proposal to Town Council on Thursday, February 4, 2010. She also asked the EDB to serve as an advisory board as the project develops; she will need to present a Master Plan for the project to the Town in May of 2010.

Ms. Raiola estimated that the project would cost between \$700,000 and \$1,000,000; the funding would come from donations and grants. The Town would be responsible for maintaining the building, but in exchange would receive a potential annual rental income of \$150,000 to \$180,000. The Board emphasized the intrinsic value of the project as an employment and educational opportunity for the community.

Ms. Raiola stated that she would need to work out an interim agreement with the Town to manage the building while she is seeking funding for the project. She emphasized that structural changes to the building would not precede her being able to secure funding. Ms. Raiola asked the Board to consider the positives and negatives of the proposal and to consider what the Town would ultimately like to gain from the project. The Board thanked Ms. Raiola for her presentation. After this item, Ms. Raiola and Mr. Brown left the meeting.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 18, 2010

The minutes from the regular meeting held on January 18, 2010 were reviewed by the members via email. A motion was made to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

3. Discussion and Update on Downtown Parking and Signage

Ms. Well stated that the Town Council approved the expenditure for parking signage at the previous meeting. Ms. Dionne presented the Board with a design sample of the sign. Ms. Dionne and Mr. Bolster reported on quotes for the finished signs, posts, and hardware. These included a quote from Silktone Graphics for \$3200 for 100 signs and another quote through the John Massed for 40 signs including posts and hardware for \$4890. The Board emphasized the importance of using a local business. Ms. Dionne stated that she would continue to seek out comparative estimates from different vendors. Mr. Bolster stated that realistically there would be enough funding for 40 signs, which is enough to cover the downtown area. The Board discussed the need to include a few directional signs to accompany the new parking signs.

The Board discussed the shared parking agreement between the Town and Bank of America; it was agreed that Mr. Bolster should be accompanied by a Council member when meeting with Bank of America. The Board also discussed time limits for parking, and issues related to enforcement and public notification. Mr. Bolster stated the Parking and Signage subcommittee will meet with John Massed, the Chief of Police, and Bank of America as part of moving ahead with this project.

4. Discussion of EDB Budget Items

The Board discussed issue of spending the remaining \$500.00 in the 2009 EDB budget. Ms. Silva suggested that the Board use the money for a banner system. The banners would be mounted to telephone poles or light posts and would serve a flagging system to welcome people into town. Ms. Dionne suggested that she could use existing artwork from the store front signs as part of the banner design. A motion was made to use the remaining budget funds for banners for the downtown, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

5. Discussion and Review of EDB 2009/2010 Plan

The Board discussed the Warren Arts objective and the possibility of dedicating funds from the 2010-2011 budget to improve the Town Hall lobby. Mr. Frerichs mentioned that Ms. Horton should talk to John Massed about maintenance funds already in place for this kind of improvement.

In reviewing the EDB 2009/2010 Plan, Ms. Brunini expressed her concerns that the goals set in the work plan lacked a set time frame for completion. Mr. Heckert emphasized that the duty of the Board is to make recommendations to Town Council; he stated that Town Council has not put all of the Board's recommendations into action. Mr. Frerichs praised the Board and its accomplishments over the last year. Ms. Volino suggested having another meeting before the general meeting in March to discuss the Work Plan, but the Board was unable to set a date convenient for all members. Ms. Brunini offered to work

with Ms. Wells as an advisor on changes to the Work Plan; Ms. Dionne offered to work with Ms. Brunini as well to catch her up on the objectives covered in the Work Plan

6. Discussion of assistant recommendation for Caroline Wells, Director of Planning and Community Development

The Board discussed recommending an assistant for Caroline Wells to Town Council. Ms. Dionne mentioned that it is unfortunate that grant opportunities are forfeited due to a lack of time of the part of Ms. Wells. Ms. Wells suggested that the Board draft a letter to Town Council on its own behalf with references to items in the EDB Work Plan which would support the benefit of an assistant for her office. Ms. Brunini stated that she would draft a letter to Town Council for the first budget hearing on March 27, 2010.

7. Discussion of improvements to downtown business zone

Due to the time, the Board agreed to postpone this item until a later date.

8. Discussion of letter from Jonathan Glatt regarding deposits required for new businesses by National Grid

Mr. Frerichs reported that state law prohibits a utility provider from denying service to a landlord because of a previous tenant's outstanding utility fees. Mr. Frerichs stated that he has contacted the Attorney General regarding Mr. Glatt's deposit issue with National Grid.

Given the time, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald
March 13, 2010*