



## Town of Warren, Rhode Island

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# Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on October 18, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. Board Members present included Sara Volino, Davison Bolster, Paula Silva, Karen Dionne, Brandt Heckert, and Spencer Morris. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB. Ex officio member Caroline Wells was not present. Town Council member David Frerichs was in attendance. Keri Cronin was present to discuss the Liberty Street School.

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

### **1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of September 20, 2010**

The minutes from the regular meeting held on September 20, 2010 and the minutes were reviewed by the members via email. A motion was made by Mr. Bolster to accept the minutes with the following corrections: Linda Brunini attended Congress of Councils along with Councilor DePasquale and Councilor Tattrie, and also attended the RIEDC We Mean Business trade show together with Councilor Tattrie. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dionne, and all members were in favor.

### **2. Update and Discussion on Liberty Street School**

The Board discussed the nature of the 90 day negotiation period with Brito regarding the development of the Liberty Street School. Mr. Frerichs stated the developer would primarily be examining the oil tank for leakage and other physical obstacles to developing the property. The Board discussed the need for a meeting with the Town Planner, the Town Solicitor, the Town Manager, a member of the EDB, and a representative from the Liberty Street Neighborhood association. The discussion focused primarily on the point that the neighbors abutting the property do not support the proposed number of units. The Board questioned whether Brito would be inclined to change their development plans if the EDB and the neighbors did not support the development plans. When asked by Ms. Volino what is in place to guarantee the quality of Brito's work, Mr. Frerichs replied their reputation and the quality of their past construction projects.

Ms. Cronin, an abutter to the Liberty Street School and owner of a Water Street business, stated that she felt the building was not marketed properly and that the plans being considered may not be the best possible use of the historic school. Mr. Frerichs stated that he was willing to arrange a meeting within the next two weeks with Brito and representatives from the Town boards and Town government, as well as representatives

from the neighborhood, in order to a consensus regarding directions and goals for developing the Liberty Street School. Ms. Cronin stated she would put her name in with the Town Clerk as the official neighborhood representative. Mr. Morris stated that he was willing to be the representative for the EDB and that he would meet with the neighborhood group to organize its concerns and goals before meeting with the developer and the town officials.

### **3. Discussion of Second Story Theatre and Development of a business retention plan**

Ms. Volino, citing an article in the New York Times regarding the Second Story Theatre, introduced the Board to a discussion on how the EDB can best support existing businesses that might be negatively influenced by the economy. Ms. Dionne suggested cross marketing with other local businesses, especially restaurants. The Board discussed the role of the East Bay Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Heckert suggested that the restaurant in the building, which is now closed, is something that needs to be promoted. Specifically in regards to Second Story Theatre, Mr. Morris suggested the best route would be to meet with the owner, Ed Shea, and ask him for feedback about how the EDB can best help his business. Ms. Volino agreed to move forward by meeting with Mr. Shea to discuss this issue.

Ms. Dionne introduced the topic of meeting with Al Bilideau to discuss his progress with his property on the town wharf, especially in regards to the future of the Narragansett Seafood Co-op. Ms. Dionne made a motion to invite Mr. Bilideau to the next EDB meeting, Ms. Silva seconded, and all members were in favor.

### **4. Discussion on Warren Arts Council**

The discussion on the Warren Arts Council focused on whether it should be part of the EDB or part of a separate board. Ms. Silva mentioned that 17 communities in the stated have separate Arts councils as well as economic development councils. Mr. Morris asked the Board to consider the economic impact of the arts in Warren and if the arts need to be set as an economic priority. Mr. Bolster added that originally the promotion of the arts was a priority for the EDB. In as much as the EDB is scheduled to be expanded, Ms. Volino noted that one of the new members might be responsible for overseeing this part of the work plan. Mr. Morris mentioned tax programs that are already in existence that might be modified to fit the arts program. Ms. Volino requested that the Warren Arts Council be on the Agenda for the November meeting of the EDB.

### **5. Update on parking signage and the banner project**

Mr. Bolster reported that he has not yet coordinated a meeting with the Traffic Commission to formalize time limits for the parking signs. Mr. Bolster stated the cost of the posts for the signs have double since last year, but that Caroline Wells is confident that she has grant money to cover to extra cost of the signs. Mr. Heckert stated he would follow up with Ms. Wells on ordering the sign posts so that the posts will be available as soon as the decision is made on the time limits. The Board discussed the issue of enforcement on parking time limits. Ms. Silva and Ms. Dionne reported that the banners will most likely not be installed

until the spring of 2011, but are still working with Caroline Wells and the Department of Public Works to have the banner mounting hardware installed on the utility poles.

## **6. Discussion on streamlining the Agenda/Minutes process**

The Board requested that Ms. MacDonald have the draft of the meeting minutes available to the Board two weeks after the meeting, and to also remind the Board members about the Agenda for the following meeting at that time. Ms. MacDonald requested that the Board members send their Agenda items to Ms. Volino the Monday before the scheduled meeting. Ms. Volino agreed to organize the Agenda items before forwarding them to Ms. MacDonald.

## **7. New Business**

Mr. Frerichs mentioned the need to schedule a meeting with Narragansett Electric regarding remediation issues and the future plans for the building on the Warren River just north of the Warren Manufacturing (American Tourister) mill.

Ms. Dionne requested that Caroline Wells, the Town Planner, be invited to come to a meeting to update the Board on the Storefront Improvement project and CBDG funds.

Mr. Morris introduced the Board to his interest in finding a way to develop the utility right of way that cuts across Child Street into a public greenway/pedestrian walkway. The Board had suggestions for Mr. Morris going forward with this plan. Ms. Volino suggested that this should be an Agenda item for the November meeting.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Monday, November 15, 2010.

Given the time, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

*Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald  
November 3, 2010*



