



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 October 17, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. The presiding officer was Sara Volino. Board members present were Paula Silva, Karen Dionne, Brandt Heckert, Kate Dickson, Joel Cary, and Darcy DaCosta. Board members Mark Lombardi and Spencer Morris were absent. Ex officio member Caroline Wells was absent. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB.

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

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of September 26, 2011

The minutes from the regular meeting held on September 26, 2011 were reviewed by the members via email. Ms. Dickson made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Mr. Heckert, and all members were in favor.

2. Discussion with Anthony DeSisto regarding zoning and planning ordinances

Mr. DeSisto was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, the Board agreed to postpone this item until a future date.

3. Nomination and election of President and Vice President for 2011-2012

Ms. Volino nominated Mr. Heckert for President for 2011-2012, Mr. Cary seconded the nomination, and all members were in favor. Mr. Heckert accepted the nomination.

Mr. Heckert nominated Ms. Dionne for Vice-President, Ms. Dickson seconded the nomination, and all members were in favor. Ms. Dionne accepted the nomination.

4. Review of 2011-2012 Work Plan (Heckert)

The Board agreed that this is a good time to review the current work plan and briefly reviewed the following items:

In the discussion of Objective 1, Downtown business district improvement, the Board discussed hosting an "open house" for downtown business owners in the winter of 2012. The Board discussed how the event would be structured, including venues. Ms. Volino suggested having an open invitation posted in the Warren Times. Ms. Volino, Ms. Dionne, and Mr. Heckert formed a workgroup to develop a business survey and will report on their

progress at the November meeting. The Board agreed that Action 4, Develop New Standards for Business Areas, is an item that requires feedback from the Town Solicitor. The Board decided to discuss this item with Mr. DeSisto at a future meeting.

Under Objective 2, Helping Visitors Navigate Warren, the Board discussed the benefits of shifting the signage in the downtown municipal lot to make it more accessible as a public parking lot. Ms. Dionne discussed coordinating efforts for a town “pride” campaign; the board discussed trade shows, promotional materials, and a calendar of events for the town. Mr. Cary stated he would look into a website to centralize EDB information.

Regarding Objective 3, Action 4, Banner Program, Mr. Heckert said he would follow up with Caroline Wells regarding purchasing brackets for the additional banners, with the goal of having them installed in the spring.

In the review of Objective 4, WarrenArts Workgroup, Making Warren an Arts Destination, Ms. Silva have a brief overview on the activities of the Warren Arts Initiative. The discussion closed with a review of Objective 5, Economic Development Education, in which the Board decided to incorporate a speaker presentation as part of the “open house” for downtown business owners to be held in winter of 2012. The Board mentioned Providence architect Donald Powers as a possible speaker.

5. Discussion and Action on transferring EDB funds to an account for Warren Arts Initiative (Silva)

Ms. Silva requested that the Warren Arts Initiative have a separate account to access funds for specific projects, such as art installation at the town hall. Ms. Silva stated that the Town Manager gave his approval on setting up a special account with a portion of EDB funds. Ms. Dionne made a motion to transfer \$200.00 from the EDB account to an account for the Warren Arts Initiative, the motion was seconded by Ms. DaCosta, and all members were in favor. Ms. Volino stated she would contact Mr. Paduch about the transfer of the EDB funds to the separate account.

6. Update on creation of a business retention plan (Lombari)

Mr. Lombari was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, the Board agreed to postpone the item until a future date.

7. Update on status of economic development section of Comprehensive Plan (Dionne)

Although the town has been granted a reprieve on the completion of the Comprehensive Plan until 2013, Ms. Dionne stated that the EDB should continue the revision of the economic section of the Comprehensive Plan. The last meeting with the planning board and the Town Planner regarding the EDB portion of the Comprehensive plan took place in April 2011; at that time only two pages of the section were reviewed. Ms. Dionne said she will contact Councilman Bolster regarding scheduling another meeting with the planning board. Ms. Dionne was advised to contact planning board member Jane MacDougall as well.

8. Update on Parking Survey with parking workgroup

The members of the parking survey workgroup stated that they are in the process of preparing a report to present to Town Council at the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 8th, 2011. The report will consist of a parking inventory together with written suggestions for parking improvements.

9. Discussion on promoting local businesses on the East Bay bike path (Cary)

The Board discussed the East Bay bike path and in particular the kiosk that is located at the juncture of Railroad Avenue, Child Street, and the bike path. The opinion was that the area is a missed opportunity for informational signage, brochures, and maps that could potentially promote the town and its businesses. Ms. Dickson noted that the Discover Warren group is interested in improving the kiosk.

10. Report on tax stabilization programs (Morris)

Mr. Morris was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, the Board agreed to postpone the meeting until a future date.

A motion was made to adjourn, the motion was seconded, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

Minutes submitted by Kristin MacDonald
November 16, 2011

