

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL AT THE NEXT  
ESSEX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
ESSEX TOWN HALL  
June 12, 2013 - 4:00pm**

The Essex Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, June 12, 2013 at 4:00pm. In attendance were Lon Seidman, John Beveridge, David Sousa, Ed Cook (4:03Arrival) and Mark Uihlein. Also in attendance was Kelley Frazier, Secretary to the Board. Absent: David Winstead and Robert Laundry

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Seidman at 4:00pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon a motion made by John Beveridge and seconded by Ed Cook in the Commission unanimously **VOTED** to approve the minutes as amended from the March 2013 Essex Economic Development Commission meeting.

**Visitors:**

**CT Main Street Membership**

Judy Heiser asked for an update on the Main Street Initiative program. She noted that there are specific needs and would like to know the resources available. Mr. Seidman will contact the Main Street Initiative group to start the process and to ask them for guidance. Ms. Heiser noted that flags were placed on Main Street in Essex and Ivoryton on the lamp posts. Centerbrook does not have lamp posts and it is difficult to get authorization to use the utility poles.

**Commissioners:**

None

**REPORT FROM TOWN HALL**

Mr. Needleman was not present.

**COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Cook noted that CL& P is working on the upgrades.

Mr. Beveridge said that The Cooper Beach Inn has been renovated. He noted that the menu looks good and is affordable.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

The discussions to bring natural gas to the Essex Elementary School are moving forward. There is a meeting with the gas company and the school on June 18, 2013 at 2:00pm at Central Offices at the John Winthrop Middle School. The savings for the school is significant. This is timely because the school needs to purchase a new boiler. There are incentives available to convert to natural gas for efficient burners. Mr. Seidman noted that the school will likely be sponsoring a public forum that may also be of interest to businesses. The long term plan is to get major users to have access.

The Legislature passed a property tax abatement option for renewable energy for commercial use. For systems installed after October, 2013 the town has the option to extend the abatement to solar and wind installations. After October 2014 the Town has give the abatement to any user that meets the qualification.

**STEAP Grant Award**

Mr. Beveridge has received the final plan for the town hall. He is happy with the layout. There will be more landscaping done. There may be upgrades to the police station entrance.

**Zoning Discussion**

Mr. Beveridge will be attending the Zoning Meeting regarding the expansion of a convenience store that also contains the Dunkin Donuts in Main Street Centerbrook. There was a discussion regarding the entrances on to Dennison Road. Mr. Sousa said that landscape trailers can cause traffic congestion. This needs to be addressed.

Mr. Uihlein noted that supporting the expansion of another convenience store in Essex is not good and that there may be too many stores in town than the local economy might be able to support. Mr. Uihlein said that in Old Saybrook, Food Works had to make a decision to move because their parking evaporated with Starbucks next door.

Mr. Beveridge would rather see a viable gas station/convenience store at the former Sunoco than the vacant property there now.

There is concern regarding the land across from the Sunoco station. Mr. Beveridge noted that on Route 153 the Iron Chef property and the farm is vulnerable property. He suggested a joint meeting with the Zoning Commission to discuss the properties that are vulnerable in our town and what we want our town to look like. This is the time to discuss the critical pieces of property. Mr. Beveridge would like to have the public invited.

Mr. Beveridge will speak with Al Wolfram and Norm Needleman about the Commission's concerns.

Mr. Cook suggested having a process for possible applicants to inform them about the town's zoning guidelines.

Mr. Uihlein said that part of the Commission's goals was to attract businesses that will keep the mill rate low and to offer employment opportunities.

Mr. Sousa noted that the Ivoryton Farmer’s Market will be starting in a week and a half. It was suggested that the green in Ivoryton be used for the Farmer’s Market. Park and Recreation has a non-commercial clause for this property. This should be looked at. Mr. Seidman will discuss with Mr. Needleman.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion duly made and seconded, the Essex Economic Development Commission unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn at 4:58p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley S. Frazier, Essex Economic Development Commission Clerk