

**Essex Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
Essex Town Hall
March 14, 2012**

Present:

Commissioners Bill Foster, Mark Uihlein, Bob Laundry,
John Beveridge and Lon Seidman

First Selectman Norman Needleman

Chairman Thompson and Commissioner David Winstead were excused from today's meeting

Guests:

Call to Order:

Commissioner Seidman called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Seidman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2012 meeting. A motion was offered by Commissioner Beveridge and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Communications/Public Comment:

Peter Lucchese. ? from Sound Harbor Real Estate
Leslie Strauss from Century 21 of Chester
Wayne D'Amico of Property Politics

EDC / Real Estate:

The Economic Development Commission heard from local commercial Realtors to get input on how the Commission can better help attract prospective businesses.

Mr. Lucchese said in his experience people often avoid Essex as a commercial location because zoning regulations are too difficult along with septic and parking issues. Mr. Lucchese brought a client to the meeting who is attempting to open a business in the former Visiting Nurses property

4:15pm – Norman Needleman arrived.

Commissioner Seidman asked what the EDC could do to help his client. Mr. Lucchese responded that a commission presence at two upcoming Zoning and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings could be of assistance. Commissioner Beveridge volunteered to attend.

Ms. Strauss handed out a brochure produced by local merchants. She said in Chester the merchant group meets monthly and membership in the organization is free of charge. She spoke about some of the activity in downtown Chester. Commissioner Seidman asked Ms. Strauss what would help her as a Realtor in listing commercial properties. Ms. Strauss said that a single point of contact in the town to help prospective business owners navigate the process would be helpful.

First Selectman Needleman replied that the town is working towards having a common administrative group to work with departments.

Mr. D'Amico discussed some of the economic realities that often drive real estate values and lead to an area being attractive or unattractive for particular business types. He added that zoning regulations need to be exact and concise.

Report from Town Hall

Norman Needleman provided a brief report.

The property that is being worked on is the L.C. Doane property across from the Sunoco station. The basketball court will be located in Hubbard Park, not in the old commuter lot.

Old Business:

No old business was discussed.

New Business:

A motion was offered by Commissioner Foster, seconded by Commission Laundry to empower Commissioner Beveridge to attend zoning meetings in support of a applicants for a prospective businesses in Centerbrook and for Commissioner Seidman to draft a letter in support. Motion approved unanimously.

Commissioner Laundry reported that pursuant to the Traffic Study, the Planning Commission is working on creating an Ad Hoc subcommittee on the traffic calming. They are looking for representatives from the EDC and Selectmen.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Commissioner Beveridge, it was voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:40p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Judge