

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING via Zoom  
December 9, 2020**

**Present:** Chairman Janet Peckinpaugh, Brian Weinstein, Peter Decker and Susan Malan.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Peckinpaugh at 4:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion made by Brian Weinstein to approve the October 2020 minutes. Peter seconded.

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Visitors:** none

**Commissioners:** None

**REPORT FROM EDC CONSULTANT/ SUSAN MALAN-**

The Town formed a “Reopen Advisory Committee” which meeting weekly again now with the upsurge in COVID 19 cases and phase heightened. It is definitely bad out there for businesses right now. They are all “maxed” out and hanging in there.

Los Charros/The Essex – new format in place Essex Public Market & Food Hall – multiple vendors.

New tenant going into former Morgan Stanley space on South Main Street – broker contacted me saying they would be in touch re: EDC - update; have not heard from the tenant and property still vacant.

8 Main Street Essex – Ingrid Bergman Interiors -not sure when they plan to open

Town Soup looking has sublet their space to Elizabeth Hendee owner of Chequers Design – open for business

53-55 Main Street - Build out in process for Privateers Pizza and Provisions. – update – hoping to be open for business in 45-60 days.

New tenant has town approval in the former dry cleaner space in Centerbrook – it’s an off shoot of Herbal Life – shakes and smoothies – not sure when they plan to open

Mamas Gardens is open, retail shop carries skincare products 1-3 North Main

One new potential tenant looking for retail space on Main Street Essex

Confectioners working on build out at 5 North Main SX – site work in process, build out nearly complete -they hope to be open Spring 2021

**Attended:** General meeting of the Essex Board of Trade; Board Meeting of Essex Board of Trade, Attend Reopen Advisory Committee meetings

**REPORT FROM ZONING OFFICER JOE BUDROW:**

Joe gave Susan the report. Susan reported on updates:

The following applications have seen activity since the last submission to the Essex EDC:

**Approved Zoning Permits:**

**Application No. 20-162** – 90 Main Street, CTBK – New Use: Ballard Insurance Agency

**Special Exception Applications:**

**Application No. 20-13** - An application for a Special Exception to locate a self-storage facility within an existing commercial building at 35-41 Industrial Park Road, Building No. 5/6. Public Hearing scheduled for January 11, 2021

**Petitions for Text Amendments:**

**Application No. 20-10 – Attorney Robert Avena.** A Petition for a text amendment to allow self-storage facilities in the Limited Industrial District, but only within existing buildings. Decision made on November 30. APPROVED

**News:**

Essex Marine Group established an inland marine use at a property on Industrial Park Road. Soon will be going to Zoning Commission for a Special Exception. Was told an application was near.

**ACTION ITEMS:** None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

Is the downtown thing dead? Janet says it is until after the election and then we can revisit it. We can regroup after the election and discuss getting it on the BOS agenda.

George asked about downtown Essex bike riding regulations. Who could enforce this? It is out of control, they are going up instead of down. There is going to be an accident. What can be done? Would a sign enforce it? People ignore the signs, discussion about what could be done included shared roads, bike lanes like other towns have. Maybe check how other towns enforce this. Don't give up on the sidewalks. Janet will try to get us on the BOS meeting coming up. The project that we are tabling is having students work with us on it, many of them have graduated.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Janet had set to approve the EDC calendar for next year but we do not have a quorum. It will need to be a special meeting. On the website, it lists Janet, Brian, Peter, Betsy and 3 vacant positions. That means that George, Ed Cook and David are not members. Janet sent two names in and is hoping it works out.

Peter talked about putting together a EDC plan. Plan being formulated for EDC to work with newly formed combined Planning and Zoning Commission including an EDC plan. He talked with Norm about this- either borrowing one and making our own or creating one of our own. The economic development plan intertwines with Planning and Zoning and would highlight the three boroughs strengths and weaknesses. That way we can address the weaknesses. It is frustrating to work on something and then have no decision or plan to do anything since it doesn't make it past our commission. Peter said it is not anyone's fault, he is not blaming anyone, he is just trying to brainstorm and find ways to make the commission members not as frustrated as they have been. Susan mentioned we have an EDC plan on our website and she has asked for it at one point to be taken down because it is from 2005 and it not current. She emailed it to all. Discussion about the document. Everyone is going to look it over and make notes about updating data and tables. We can discuss it at the January meeting.

## **Upcoming Guests and Meeting Locations:**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion was made by Brian Weinstein to adjourn the meeting at 4:40. Peter Decker seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Sadlowski, Commission Clerk