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Town of East Haven, CT
Economic Development Commission Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2021

Members Present:

Joe Bittner, Steve Haddon, Bob Schumitz, John Tarducci

Staff Present:

R. Bladwin, Dale Kroop, Tina Hedley

Presenters:

Barbara Malmberg and Ginny from REX Development

Called meeting to order: Raymond Baldwin, Director, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Roll call, a quorum is present.

Pledge of Allegiance: members of the commission and those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bob Schumitz made a motion, 2nd by John Tarducci, to approve the minutes for March 22, 2021's meeting.

Election of Officers: John Tarducci nominated Bob Schumitz for Chairperson of the Economic Development Commission, 2nd by Joe Bittner. Bob Schumitz nominated Joe Bittner for Vice Chairperson, 2nd by John Tarducci.

Bob Schumitz thanked the board and talked about his time on the commission. Bob said it's a great opportunity to put our stamp as the Economic Development on the Town. Bob asked that meeting minutes get completed closer to the meeting dates, which will allow more time to review before the next meeting. Bob also congratulated Joe Bittner on his Vice Chair Position.

Joe Bittner said the commission used to be very active, it's been quite dormant after the death of Mr. Art Desorbo and is happy to bring the board more active.

Discussion of East Haven's real property assessment increase deferral program: This program was first instituted back in 1993-1994, with a revision in the late 90's. Ray said, the town council made a resolution enactment in 2005 of the current program. It has to follow the CT state statues. It's a simple program. Any East Haven Business or industrial zone property owner can apply. Nearly all medium or large sized towns in CT have enacted a similar, or same program. It's to enhance or expand for current businesses or for companies outside to relocate here. The assessment deferral program only applies to new construction and/or renovations, the amount of the deferral is based solely on the amount that is invested, It does not defer any existing or owed taxes. It has to follow the CT state statues, statue 12-65. This is an Economic Development tool.

Bob Schumitz mentioned that this has been put into place by the former Mayor in 2005, a resolution by the town council, it's just being brought up front now to be used more. Ray brought up that it was put into place in the 90's, it hasn't been used very much.

Questions were asked by commissioners. This program is listed on the Town of East Haven Website to view and it outlines the program. Ray Baldwin can answer any questions anyone may have about the program.

State Department of Economic Development Update: Barbara Malmberg and Ginny Kozlowski are presenting. The presentation is attached. Rex Development, Economic Development for the region SCRCOG area, Greater New Haven, Milford, New Haven and Madison. One of things they do is comprehensive Economic Development strategies. They do a five-year update and annual updates. We try to recognize area of commonality to make life better for everyone. They want input from towns to lift the entire region. From rural, cities and towns, they do get many people involved with this process. They will be closely in-line with the state with the money that will be available. As mentioned, this presentation is attached.

Steve Haddon said he was aware due to being on the library board, PPP-Payroll protection program, a loan that becomes a forgivable grant. Restaurants I think will have another opportunity coming out within a week or two and also Veterans, minority and woman can apply before the general public.

Ray Baldwin said we retained Dale Groop as a grant writer for the town and has been very helpful with pointing departments in the right direction for grants. Ray informed Barbara about the SWOT analysis given to department heads in East Haven and also passed along the analysis to the Chamber of Commerce, he will pass the info along to Barbara once its complete and available.

Barbara (Rex) told the board that housing costs are great right now in CT. Single family homes are up 15% and continue to rise. Homes are selling higher than priced right now and most are dealing with competitive bidders.

Ginny (Rex) mentioned that more demand exists along the shoreline, people who have the funds to purchase a secondary home are doing so as well. If interest rates stay low, it will continue.

John Tarducci told everyone with the shortage of properties, it's a sellers' market.

Comment from Steve Haddon, there will be a demand in urban areas. Too many options for business right now with working remote, many people will be staying home. Work from home software is being used. The reassessment that's going on this year should be the biggest factor for a higher assessment and a lower mill rate. Then we can be more selective of businesses that come here. People look at mill rates, ours is competitive for surrounding towns. The town has always taken whatever development that has been put in front of us, other towns turn down projects. These developers are accepted here, I say were under developed because the quality isn't what we want. Redevelopment not development is what we need now. Were flooded with condos, apartments, senior housings, it's a problem.

John Tarducci told the commission, I think that chapter is ending for the town for Economic Development. The 2020 to 2021 change I'm looking at; the average sale is 261k which is a good

percentage all though we have a lack of supply. MLMS reported this information, so we can leave this chapter.

Chairperson, Bob Schumitz thanked Barbara and Ginny for their presentation.

Website Update: Tina Hedley, from the Mayor's office talked about the town website. The current website company that the town uses has been contacted, conversations have been had about what we would like to see for a new up-to-date design for the town website. Once this website is completed and live, it would then benefit the Economic Development Page as well as all departments and most of all East Haven Residents. It's exciting and will be a great new design. Currently we have properties listed on the town website on the Economic Development Page. However, it will be a series of meetings for the design part and will take some time but it has begun.

Dale Groop agreed, an attractive website will attract new business.

Ray Baldwin said we were in the IT dark age and I want to thank Tina who does a lot with this, with little resources. Also, that Advance CT is being used on other town websites. We put up some properties on our website, we will see if it's successful until the website is updated.

Public Comment: Chairperson Bob Schumitz asked if anyone in the audience had any public comment.

Bob stated, I will get in touch with our new member, Mohan. The vision put together is outstanding. It's all positive we have going forward in our town. Our next meeting will be live so quests can speak in June.

John Tarducci told the commission the next scheduled meeting, May, is Memorial Day, so June will be the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned:

Bob Schumitz motion to end the meeting, Steve Haddon 2nd the motion. 8:11 the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tina Hedley, Temporary Clerk