STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016, 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Chairman - Sean Kelly, David Hurley, Stanislav Moline, and Alternates Francie Berger and Donna Resutek

ABSENT: Vice Chairman - Chris Todd and Alternate - Stefanie Cunningham

STAFF PRESENT: Lisa M. Houlihan, AICP, Town Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER:
Chairman Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. **Discussion: (CERC) Connecticut Economic Resource Center's self-assessment survey.**

Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, distributed copies of the electronic questionnaire the commission completed in February. Chairman Kelly requested that a representative from CERC attend an upcoming meeting to help the commission assess survey responses. Ms. Houlihan asked if the commission would establish a list of tasks already identified as priorities and within their capacity to complete before contracting with CERC.

Open discussion ensued about how to proceed. The commission agreed that a main objective is to establish a business retention and growth strategy. Chairman Kelly suggested analyzing Ellington's strengths and weaknesses and to craft retention and attraction goals. The commission debated if Ellington's proximity to major interstates is a drawback.

One of Ellington's assets is its community-oriented business culture. Commission Hurley read from Ellington Printery's homepage wherein they tout Ellington's sense of community as one of their business assets. Chairman Kelly recalled feedback from local businesses during the last round of visits crediting local officials for being accessible.

The commission also identified Ellington's educational system and its educated workforce as other strengths. Access to utilities is also positive. The vast majority of commercial and industrial properties are served by public sewer and water. Other utilities are also present, but exact locations and capacity is unknown. Ms. Houlihan will pursue additional information regarding locations and level of service for water, cell service, and natural gas.

The commission asked Ms. Houlihan to gather information regarding Ellington's crime rate and affordability (land cost and taxes) in comparison to neighboring communities.

The commission will conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) to understand assets and constraints and identify favorable and negative elements.

2. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber)

a. Economic Development Committee Meeting(s) – Staff Report

Ms. Houlihan attended Connecticut Business Day at the Legislative Office Building earlier in the day. The event was well attended by businesses, non-profits, and statewide chambers. Governor Malloy addressed the group. His comments revolved around the state's fiscal shortfalls and the need to reduce spending. He explained loss in revenues and the need for state departments to live within their means alluding that cuts are imminent.

b. 21st Annual Business Showcase, April 5, 2016, 4 PM – 7 PM, Maneeley's, South Windsor, CT.

Chairman Kelly explained that last year the commission shared a booth with the Ellington Farmers' Market. He noted that the Farmers' Market received the majority of interest and suggested foregoing this year's event. The commission concurred that they will be better positioned next year to present an engaging booth after they finish analyzing the self-assessment survey.

BY CONSENSUS THE COMMISSION DECLINED ATTENDING THE 2016 BUSINESS SHOWCASE.

3. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

Ms. Houlihan explained that regulation amendments will be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission to remove restrictive language associated with farm stores. She described two potential development proposals for properties on the east side of West Road south of Middle Butcher Road. One includes constructing a new building for a farm store and agritourism activities and the other proposes to convert an old apple storage building into a bakery and luncheonette.

She also described a proposal for a new large cow barn and automated milking parlor at Oak Ridge Dairy on Jobs Hill Road. The milking parlor will have an observation deck.

4. **Report: Business Directory/Business Surveys and Site Visits**

Commissioner Moline questioned if the link to Shop Ellington appeared on the Town's new website. Commissioner Moline viewed the website on his mobile device and found the Shop Ellington logo and link at the bottom of the website's main page.

5. **Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs**

   a. **Proof of reimbursement for unfulfilled portion of Tax Abatement for 6 Nutmeg Drive, T & L Walker (Skip's Septic) pursuant to sale of property to the Town of Ellington for a satellite firehouse.**

   Ms. Houlihan distributed a copy of the closing statement between the Town of Ellington and Skip's Septic for the sale of 6 Nutmeg Drive. The settlement includes an adjustment of to refund the Town for the unfulfilled term of tax abatement granted to Skip's in 2009.

6. **Report: Current Economic Activity**

Ms. Houlihan reported that a local builder recently met with staff and presented a preliminary plan for the redevelopment of two, possibly three properties, on the east side of Route 83 south of Country Pure. The proposal will likely include demolishing existing structures and constructing a new building for retail, restaurant, and office space.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of the February 10, 2016, regular meeting minutes.**

MOVED (RESUTEK), SECONDED (BERGER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 10, 2016, AS WRITTEN.

2. **Correspondence:**

   a. **Tolland County Chamber of Commerce Regional Economic Development Forum, March 22, 2016, 9AM-10:30AM, Vernon Town Hall.**

   Ms. Houlihan distributed a flyer advertising upcoming regional economic development forums. The event on March 22, 2016 is local. Those planning to attend should contact the number on the flyer to RSVP.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (MOLINE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN AT 8:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Houlihan

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Acting Recording Secretary