



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016, 7:00 PM

PRESENT: Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Chris Todd, Regular Members Stanislav Moline and Donna Resutek and Alternates Stefanie Cunningham and Francie Berger

ABSENT: David Hurley

STAFF

PRESENT: Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Savannah Blantz, Recording Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

MOVED (CUNNINGHAM) SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADD TO THE AGENDA DISCUSSION REGARDING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE FY 2016-2020 UNDER ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Discussion: Connecticut Economic Resource Center's self-assessment survey.

The commission and staff discussed and compared the 2014 and 2016 Connecticut Economic Resource Center's Town Profiles for Ellington. Questions were raised about what industries residents desire to have in Town. Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner asked the commission to complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) worksheet for business attraction and business retention in Ellington.

Collectively, the commission and staff identified the strengths of attracting businesses as an educated local population and close proximity to major highways. The limited sewer capacity in Ellington and that the talent of local residents does not fit the labor force were identified as weaknesses. An identified threat was that other municipalities are even closer to major highways than Ellington. An opportunity that Ellington offers to attract businesses is the tax abatement program.

The commission and staff agreed that the strengths of business retention include an educated local population and close proximity to major highways. Weaknesses identified were that local talent does not fit the local sectors, the limited sewer capacity and

parking space requirements. An identified threat to business retention was that other municipalities are even closer to major highways.

The commission and staff discussed a town-wide farm-to-table initiative and completed a SWOT sheet. The strengths identified with attracting this type of business were the availability of local, fresh produce and that it would support the farmers' market and outside families would be attracted to Ellington. Development of farmland was identified as a threat. Currently, the commission views a disconnected farming community as a weakness. However, the commission agreed that a farm-to-table initiative would provide opportunity for farmers and their families to become involved. The commissioners and staff are going to speak with local restaurants and businesses to identify the ways they utilize or do not utilize produce from local farms and will present the findings at the next meeting.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

2. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce

The Tolland County Chamber of Commerce has selected Kloter Farms to receive their Corporate Citizen Award for 2016. The award will be given at an event on the evening of Wednesday, October 26, 2016, in Tolland. Ms. Houlihan will email commissioners additional details about the event. She explained that funding is available for two commissioners to attend. Commissioners interested in attending should contact the Planning Department for assistance with registration.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

3. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

The commission discussed the site work underway at Oak Ridge Dairy on Jobs Hill Road. Construction will soon commence for a 370,000+ square foot barn and automated milking parlor. Ms. Houlihan explained guidance she provided to Seth Bahler, Oak Ridge Dairy regarding tax abatement opportunities. She explained that the current Tax Abatement Policy does not include agriculture as an eligible business, but noted the authority the Board of Selectmen has to amend the terms of the Policy. She provided guidance to Mr. Bahler and shared it with First Selectman Spielman.

Chairman Kelly reported that the new building will qualify for the tax exemption program for farm buildings. The exemption allows the reduction of property tax assessment for agricultural buildings not to exceed 100,000 in assessed value.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

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

There was nothing to report. NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

5. Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs

There was nothing to report. NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

6. Report: Current Economic Activity

There was nothing to report. NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the September 14, 2016 regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (TODD) SECONDED (CUNNINGHAM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

2. Correspondence:

- a. Discussion: Request for Proposals for Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside FY2016-2020.

MOVED (BERGER) SECONDED (MOLINE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN APPROVAL OF LOCAL MATCH FUNDING AND SUBMITTAL OF APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF WALK/BIKEWAYS ALONG ROUTE 83 UNDER THE TA SET-ASIDE FY2016-2020 PROGRAM.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (CUNNINGHAM) SECONDED (BERGER) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Savannah Blantz, Recording Clerk