



Economic Development Commission

Town of Bethel, Connecticut

*Bethel Municipal Center * 1 School Street * Bethel, Connecticut 06801*

(203)794-8540 Facsimile (203) 778-7520

RECEIVED

2016 FEB 18 P 12: 59

TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

4:00 P.M.

CJH MUNICIPAL CENTER-MEETING ROOM "A"

PRESENT- Michael Boyle, Chairman, Members: Kevin McMahon, Noel Gill, Roy Steiner, Bonnie Brown, Jay Streaman and Sharon Straiton. Also in attendance was Janice Chrzescijanek, Economic Development Director.

CALL TO ORDER- Michael Boyle called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT- NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES- Kevin McMahon made a motion to approve the minutes of January 20, 2016. The motion was seconded by Sharon Straiton. Vote was taken, the motion was accepted.

CLARKE BUSINESS PARK EXPANSION UPDATE- The Geological testing has been completed and the report will be ready at the end of February. Designs of the way finding signs are being worked on. Janice reported that 17 businesses had completed the survey. The business interested in the Turnage property no longer is interested due to the likelihood of having to have environmental testing done. Reports of the property being home to protected salamanders would require such testing and at an approximated cost of \$20,000.

BETHEL FORWARD UPDATE- The final draft plan will be available over the next few weeks.

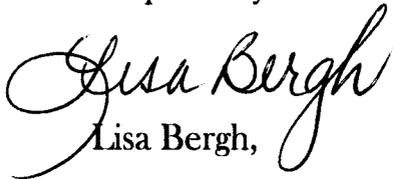
DIRECTORS REPORT- Janice Chrzescijanek presented the Directors Report (see attached). The town has again applied for a grant in the amount of \$480,000.00 for funding for a streetscape from the railroad tracks down to Route 53.

INVOICES- None

ADJOURN-

A motion to adjourn was made by Bonnie Brown; the motion was seconded by Roy Steiner. 4:36 PM

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Bergh". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lisa Bergh,

Recording Secretary



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street, Bethel, CT 06801

Telephone: 203-794-2822 -- Fax: 203-778-7520

Email Address: eddirector@bethel-ct.gov

Economic Development Update – February 2016

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. News-Times article on January 20, 2016 – “Bethel seeks grant for streetscape”

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Property and Business Owners

1. Personal Introductions - Total of 169 visits
2. Advisory Committees
 - Clarke Business Park Advisory Committee – Met January 28th (notes attached)
 - Downtown Advisory Committee meeting – Next meeting: tbd

Commissions and Boards

1. We have only received 11 responses from boards and commissions on economic strategy. Recommend we start developing the strategic plan with the information we've received.

WCEDA

1. Regional Website - Accesswesternct.com was launched this month (see attached press release)

Bethel Arts

1. Planning a yearlong public art installation in downtown. Opening of exhibit is planned for May 7, 2016. Collaboration with Chamber of Commerce, town of Bethel, WCSU, and Cultural Alliance of Western CT.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Business Assistance

1. Business Assistance (relocation, financial, expansion, location, permit) – 124
 - Available Commercial Properties listed – 10 (-5), Available Sites listed – 5
2. New Businesses
 - **Antigona's Hair Studio** (47 Stony Hill Rd.)
3. **Old Bethel Train Station**
 - Showed property to 8 prospects.
 - Proposals are due on March 3rd.
4. Working with the **Chamber and CBIA** to develop a list of challenges to doing business in CT. It will focus mostly on labor and environmental laws and mandates.

Development Opportunities

1. **Bethel Forward**
 - Master Draft Report – Awaiting
 - Applied for **TOD Grant Program** on February 4th for \$1,017,800 for sidewalk connections on the west side of the train station.

2. **Clarke Business Park**

- **Expansion** –
 - Geological testing is complete – Report should be complete by the end of February.
- **Wayfinding signage** – In process
- **Survey** – Received 17 responses. Recommend future planning based on responses.

3. **Downtown Revitalization/ Town Commercial Improvement Plan**

- **Phase I** – Finalizing the design documents and then they will be sent to DOT for approval. Once they are approved they will go out to bid. Could take a few months.
- **Phase II** - November 28th - Applied for a **STEAP** grant in the amount of **\$500,000** for streetscape improvements and expansion on Greenwood Avenue. Still waiting.

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

Appeal

1. **Maintenance of Streetscape**
 - The town is putting together a budget to fix the **pavers and replace the missing trees** downtown.
2. **Bus Shelters** – Received grant from HART for two bus shelters. Requesting approval for funding of shelter platforms.

NEWS

Bethel seeks grants for streetscape, police station

By Nelson Oliveira | *January 20, 2016*

1



Photo: File Photo

Bethel municipal center. less

BETHEL — Town officials are seeking state grants to help fund its recently-approved police station plan and the second phase of a downtown streetscape project.

Officials submitted last week two applications with the Small Town Economic Assistance Program, which is managed by the state Office of Policy and Management.

Policy and Management.

One application seeks \$500,000 in funding for a new police station. The project, which voters approved last month, is expected to cost \$13.5 million.

The second application is for a \$483,000 grant for the town's streetscape program.

STEAP grants help fund economic development, quality-of-life and community conservation projects for small towns in Connecticut. The grants are awarded on a rolling basis.

The last time Bethel received a STEAP grant was in 2014, when the program awarded the town \$430,000 for sidewalk improvements.

Clarke Park Advisory Committee Notes Friday, January 29, 2016

1. Goals of Committee – Group agreed these are the goals.

- Identify the needs of the park
 - Improve the maintenance of the park
 - Snow plowing
 - Mowing
 - Improve the aesthetics of the park
 - Entry – Remove the stumps near Burndy
 - Park sign – water plants and mulch
 - No feather and lawn signs near entrance
 - Broker Signs
 - Improve Wayfinding
 - Signage to the park on 53 and Greenwood Avenue
 - Signage at the intersection, on top of the entry hill, that identifies the direction to each street and perhaps businesses
 - Navigation and maintenance of Second Lane
 - Provide Business Assistance
 - Educational workshops (e.g. DOL, how to file taxes)
 - Communication – Provide businesses information on federal and state programs
 - Promote park and businesses on town website.

2. Update -

- Expansion of Clarke Business Park
 - Geotechnical analysis on the soil and rock in the expansion area – In Process
- Improve Wayfinding
 - Three wayfinding signs on 53 – Need state approval.
 - Street navigational sign that would be placed at the top of the hill - Spring 2016
- Survey
 - Received 17 responses

3. Old Business -

- Pothole on Second Lane – Janice will follow-up

4. New Business

- CT Business Day – March 9, 2016 from 9:30am-12:00pm – Encourage business owners to attend
 - Meet with your state lawmakers to help them understand and support legislative proposals for a more positive business climate.
 - Topics include state fiscal policy, workplace and employment issues, transportation, regulatory burdens, and more.

5. Next meeting – May 27, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 8, 2016

**New Access Western CT Web Site
Promotes Economic Development**

AccessWesternCT.com

The Western Connecticut Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA) announces the launch of a new web site that promotes the Greater Danbury region's attributes, resources and advantages for businesses looking to expand in or relocate to the region.

AccessWesternCT.com provides business leaders and decision makers with essential information about the region's workforce, vitality, transportation and lifestyle.

Ten towns comprise the economic area for the web site: the hub of Danbury, surrounded by Sherman, New Milford, Bridgewater, New Fairfield, Brookfield, Newtown, Bethel, Redding and Ridgefield.

This area is recognized by the CT Economic Resource Center as a distinct regional economic market. It is also the northern subset of the Western CT Council of Governments which is sponsoring the effort.

The web site highlights the region's leading industries and lifestyle attributes, and includes must-know data points and articles on regional features.

According to WCEDA Chairman Hal Kurfehs, "The purpose of the website is to sell the Western Connecticut region as a whole, but also to provide a portal to each of the municipalities in the region."

Kurfehs also adds that "the 'Community Partners' tab allows an interested business to access websites of each municipality in the region for more detailed examination of their particular strengths."

Economically, Western Connecticut is diverse, with a highly skilled workforce. Geographically, Western Connecticut sits at the crossroads of major transportation arteries, and features convenient access to airports and trains.

The region's leading industries include advanced manufacturing, healthcare, digital media, research and development, pharmaceuticals and life sciences, financial services, and warehouse and distribution. Greater Danbury's vitality is also evident in the fact that it generates the highest retail sales in Connecticut.

The web site 24/7 Wall Street ranked the City of Danbury #2 nationwide for livability in 2015. Located in the heart of Western Connecticut, Danbury offers low unemployment and crime, good schools, excellent transportation options, affordable real estate and numerous amenities.

The region is located within an hour's drive of midtown Manhattan, and is near the suburban centers of Stamford and Greenwich, Connecticut and White Plains, New York, and is easily accessible yet more affordable than neighboring regions, Western Connecticut businesses enjoy a wealth of benefits, including:

- A stable economy. The region's economic diversity makes it better able to withstand downturns.
- Comparatively affordable prices. Commercial and residential real estate prices are a fraction of what consumers pay in competing areas, including Westchester County, New Jersey and New York City.
- A highly skilled, growing population. Western Connecticut has more college graduates than most other communities in the country — and our numbers grow every day.
- Access to a world-class education. Business leaders choose Western Connecticut because families get top-ranked public education, plus convenient access to leading institutions of higher education.
- An outstanding lifestyle. You will find a beautiful landscape and a wealth of recreation and cultural opportunities. Numerous amenities and services attract community-minded families and individuals to Western Connecticut.

WCEDA is a partnership between public and private leaders from a broad spectrum of interests, including economic development, chambers, higher education, the arts, health services, retail mall, banks, private industry, corporate parks and commercial real estate.

Through the web site, visitors can get in touch with town offices of economic development, chambers of commerce, the Western Connecticut Council of Governments and the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut.

AccessWesternCT.com is part of WCEDA's strategic plan to attract economic activity to the Danbury area. For more information about Western Connecticut and WCEDA, visit AccessWesternCT.com.

The web site was created by Imagemark of Wilton, Connecticut and features state of the art design.

