

**Town of Ridgefield
Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting
April 1, 2010
Town Hall Annex. P&Z Meeting Room**

Unapproved Minutes

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance Bob Knight, Paul Levine, Mark Robinson, Magdalena Fincham
Absent: Bill Markus, Rick O'Brien, Chris Fisher

Bob Knight called the meeting to order at 7:14PM

Agenda Item 1: Update on Budget Process Developments

Bob Knight summaries what occurred over the last month or two with respect to the EDC budget for 2010-2011: EDC requested from BoS a two year budget of \$64,000 to implement various initiative on the Economic Development Plan (EDP) adopted by the EDC and presented to the BoS in January. Although EDC requested to appear before the BoS to explain details of the budget request, the BoS did not grant the request. The EDC budget for 2010-2011 was set at \$5,000. Bob, Bill and Rick met with First Selectman Marconi to discuss what can be done to help the EDC implement the EDP given such a low budget. Rudy suggested that a discretionary fund accessible to the BoS may be used to fund some of the initiatives and projects under the EDP and will need to be requested on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Marconi emphasized his support for the EDC and the EDP and suggested the following to help the EDC successfully implement various initiatives of the EDP: (i) individual members of the EDC meet with individual members of the BoS to describe the EDP in detail; (ii) a BoS liaison be selected to work closely with the EDC over the next year; (iii) EDC approach local banks and other private parties to raise funding for some initiatives, as appropriate and allowable; (iv) Betty Brosius and some additional administrative support may be devoted by the Town to help the EDC. Later in the meeting it was agreed that EDC should discuss pros/cons of each of these suggestions and decide which to pursue. Bob, Bill, Rick indicated to Mr. Marconi that the "Retail Leakage Study" initiative would have to be put on hold given the low budget, as it is one of the costlier initiatives in the EDP.

Paul emphasized the importance of the EDC members living up to whatever time commitments they do make to the EDP and stated that Mr. Marconi indicated to him in a different discussion that the Town may be willing to fund particular "projects" that stem from the EDP.

Agenda Item 2: Update on Rt. 7 Initiative and forming subcommittee

Bob Knight submitted Chris Fisher's memo regarding strategy for Rt. 7 Initiative (attached) and provided summary thereof. Bob Knight made a motion that EDC recommend to BoS that a committee for the Developability of Rt. 7 be formed as outlined in Chris's memo. Mark made a motion to amend the committee as outlined in Chris's memo to also include a recommendation that a representative from the Affordable Housing Committee be included on the Rt. 7 committee. Magdalena seconded both motions and both motions passed 4 – 0.

Bob suggested Magdalena work with Chris on the Rt. 7 Initiative and Magdalena agreed, thus forming an initial small subcommittee.

Agenda Item #3: Website Update and forming subcommittee for same

Mark summarized what has happened to date with the website: in May 2009 the EDC moved hosting from previous vendor to "2 Bros.", who has been paid through June 2010 and is on a year-to-year contract with significant savings over the previous vendor. The content and functionality are less than ideal. Bob and Mark agreed to serve on a subcommittee to improve the current website and to put together a list of the desired functionality and content to be provided to a vendor(s) in order to obtain a quote(s). Mark will head up this initiative.

Agenda Item #4: Update on Incubator "With or Without Walls" Initiative

Paul discussed the need to define the product and target audience (roughly a social community for incubating businesses in Ridgefield). A possible press release and event were discussed as one future possibility for promoting the Incubator. Bob agreed to provide a general PR plan by 4/20/10. It was agreed that a budget for the Incubator should be established by 5/20/10. Paul requested that the next general EDC meeting (to be held 4/12/10) be used to brainstorm persons (i) willing to devote time to aid the businesses served by the Incubator; and (ii) to serve on the governing body of the Incubator (individuals can overlap between the two groups). As Paul will be traveling on 4/12/10, he asked that call-in information be provided such that he can participate remotely in this meeting.

Magdalena made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mark. Motion carried, 4 – 0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28.

Respectfully submitted,
Magdalena Fincham