

**TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FINAL – MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 9, 2020**

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting on January 9 at 8:00 a.m. in the 1st Floor Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Lesko; Don Peterson; John Slavin, Steve Rosato

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Bill Harris, Theater Director, Community Theater; Selectman Nancy Lefkowitz; Brian Silvestro

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Minutes: The minutes of the meetings of November 7, 2019 and December 5, 2019 were approved.

Guest Speaker; Bill Harris, Director, SHU Community Theater

Mr. Harris presented a progress report on the renovation of the Community Theater. The project is a collaboration between SHU and the Kleban Corporation. They are expecting a Fall 2020 completion and opening in celebration of the 100th year of the building. Mr. Harris stressed that the entity will represent a business in town, supported by SHU. He spoke about many of the improvements and additions that will be made to the facility; the educational elements that will be included in the programming; the involvement of WSHU; the use as part of degree programs at the University.

Ms. Lefkoitz asked if the town would have any financial exposure to which the answer was no. The expectation is that the rebirth of the Theater will benefit the town through added interest in downtown businesses.

Meeting Schedule

The proposed meeting schedule for 2020 was accepted.

Election of Officers

Mr. Lesko was nominated for chair and Mr. Peterson as vice-chair. The slate was adopted.

Update on Key Development Sites

Exide Property: Mr. Barnhart said a final public hearing on this property would be held on January 27, 2020. A motion was made and accepted to send a letter to the P & Z from the EDC.

Commissioners said an emphasis should be placed on the ability of the property to produce tax revenue. Mr. Barnhart said the town had received a grant from UI to assist in planning for this site.

Thorpe Street: the latest proposal will be considered by the P & Z next week.

Mill Hill Terrace: Mr. Barnhart said there is a piece of property (8 acres +/-) for sale on Mill Hill Terrace. A buyer is interested in it for an assisted living facility.

Community Development Block Grant Program

Mr. Barnhart provided an overview of the Community Development Block Grant Program and indicated that the Town is updating its 5-year Consolidated Plan. A small amount of CDBG funding is used to support small business development through micro-enterprise grants. Mr. Barnhart asked if the Commission would consent to holding an economic needs workshop in conjunction with the Consolidated Plan effort at its March meeting. The EDC indicated that it would like to host the meeting.

Other Business

The P & Z will be holding three meetings regarding the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Barnhart will send details of the meetings to the Commissioners.

Daphne Dixon will discuss the Electric Vehicle Study at the February meeting.

Mr. Barnhart has contacted MetroNorth about providing a speaker for a future meeting. He sees this topic as one of interest to Fairfield Town government, and the Chamber of Commerce as well as the EDC.

Mr. Barnhart will forward information about the opening of the IDEA Lab at SHU to be held on January 31, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Goethner