

Town of Fairfield

Office of Community & Economic Development Minutes of Economic Development Commission Meeting

September 3, 2020

The Economic Development Commission of the Town of Fairfield held a meeting via teleconference on Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Lesko; Don Peterson; Greg Minsky; Steve Rosato; John Slavin; Alethe Fatherley

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Barnhart, Director of Community and Economic Development; Beverly Balaz, Fairfield Chamber of Commerce

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

Minutes: The minutes of August 6, 2020 were approved unanimously.

Update on COVID-19: Response and Reopening Plan

Mr. Barnhart reported on the work of the COVID-19 Micro-Enterprise Assistance Program in Fairfield. Funds from HUD have been directed to 52 Fairfield businesses in the total amount of \$188,228 with the average grant amounting to \$3600. There were 68 applications. Recipients are from the fields of retail, food service, personal services and professional services. Grants will be expended until the allotted funds are exhausted.

Downtown Streetscape

Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Lesko commented on the appearance of the Fairfield Center streetscape. It has been many years since work was done there. The town has improvement of this area as a part of its developing capital plan. Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Hurley are putting together a plan to propose to the town. First Selectwoman Kupchik and the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce are exploring the possibility of selling named bricks as a way to raise some funds for the project. Mr. Lesko suggested that additional maintenance of the basic elements of the area would be an inexpensive, immediate improvement. Mr. Barnhart said he would speak to town personnel about this.

Update on Key Development Sites

Mr. Barnhart said that Kohl's would be closing the local store in October. The property has been purchased by a local investment group and there has been some interest in new businesses for the site.

There are no new developments on MetroCenter or Exide.

The Joe's American property is under contract though there are no immediate plans available for its use.

There are no plans to reopen the Fairfield Cinemas.

Trademark II is planning a fall occupancy.

Sally's Pizza will occupy the Barbacoa space in Trademark I.

Work is expected to be completed on the Community Theater site by the end of the year.

Post Road Circle Safety Study Update

Mr. Barnhart said a virtual public hearing was held on the design proposal from Fitzgerald & Halliday and Tighe & Bond. The public seemed to be receptive to proposed change to the area and to favor looking at the project for the long term. Businesses in the area will be asked for their input. Commissioners are requested to send comments to Mr. Barnhart.

Other Business

Ms. Balaz said the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce is launching a gift card program at the end of September. The provider company will supply data on the returns to help evaluate the value of the program to businesses and the town.

Mr. Lesko said that the Building Department is in need of the means to automate the process of issuing permits and conducting its other obligations. Mr. Barnhart will forward the concern of the EDC that this matter be addressed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October1, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Goethner

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