

Special Meeting
JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
VIA ZOOM ONLY

ROLL CALL/ATTENDANCE:

TCRC: Marilyn Ozols, Chair; Darlene Briggs, Jim Crawford, Jeff Culmone, Katy Richards, Marcia Simon and Libby Waldron

EDC: Jim Crawford, Chair; Darlene Briggs, Phil Cocchiola, Nancy Giannini, Katy Richards and Kristen Meyer

Also Present: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner, and Meri Wick, nominated to EDC

Members welcomed new Town Planner Peter Gillespie, new TCRC Member Jeff Culmone and Meri Wick.

JOINT MEETING:

1. Call to Order

Chair M. Ozols called the joint meeting of the Economic Development Commission and the Town Center Revitalization Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. FY 2022-2023 Capital Budget Request

M. Ozols said the \$1,000,000.00 that was put into reserve for wastewater is being bumped a year, but the money is still potentially being reserved out of the Town's ARPA funds. The out years are still being kept at \$500,000.00 for the Town Center pending more information each year moving forward.

3. Sidewalk/Pedestrian Connectivity Projects - Updates

a) Community Connectivity Grant – Town Center Sidewalks

M. Ozols stated that there is one outstanding item for this grant that is almost resolved. The grant should be closed out very soon.

b) Community Connectivity Grant – Essex Road and Spencer Plain Road Sidewalks

M. Ozols explained that more funding became available this year. The State went back to last year's grant applicants instead of starting fresh. \$197,578.00 was awarded to Westbrook for sidewalks that will connect the Town Center up Essex Road to Spencer Plains Road to the YMCA. The grant will pay for the construction and the Town will cover the costs of the engineering and permitting.

c) STEAP – Boston Post Road (West) Sidewalks

M. Ozols reported that the agreement is in the process of being finalized with Nathan L. Jacobson and Associates. The grant will cover engineering, design and the materials and sub-contractors. Public Works will do the actual construction.

4. Town Center Wastewater Solutions

Special Meeting
JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
VIA ZOOM ONLY

M. Ozols said that she and J. Crawford will be attending a meeting next week with P. Gillespie, J. Crawford, Registered Sanitarian Lee Archer, Director of Health Zach Faiella, WPCA Chair Sid Holbrook and First Selectman John Hall to discuss the status of the Town Center wastewater solutions. She said there will be a joint meeting at a future date with the WPCA as well. J. Crawford said he thinks it's important to clear up any misinformation and to make sure everyone has the same information regarding the capacity of the Town Center and the Vision Plan for the extent of development that could occur in the Town Center.

5. Town Center Parking Lot - Maintenance Update

M. Ozols and P. Gillespie met with the Westbrook Garden Club co-chairs, and the Garden Club members are willing to help manage the Town Center Parking Lot. They found someone who can do some maintenance. They are looking to parcel the rest out as adopt-a-spot locations to make maintenance more manageable. The driveway easement was finalized before the Key Bank was closed.

6. Westbrook Place Mural Project

J. Crawford explained that this mural would be painted on the large brick wall on the side of the Turtle Café on Route 1. There is an approved design. The TCRC received funding from the Westbrook Foundation, but they need more funding to cover all of the costs. J. Crawford reached out to General Dynamics/Electric Boat, and he has not gotten a response. He then reached out to the Nautilus Museum in Groton for funding. The Executive Director said she would bring this to their Board this spring for discussion. If that funding source doesn't work out, there is a group of local artists interested in painting the mural. The money given by the Westbrook Foundation may be enough to pay for the mural if it is painted by local artists. Another option would be to solicit donations from local businesses.

7. Town Center Facades and Building Rear Improvement Program/ Tax Incentive Program

J. Crawford said there is interest on the part of business owners in the Town Center to do some revitalization of their buildings. The TCRC was hoping to have a more comprehensive vision in place before they put it out. P. Gillespie said he has experience with façade programs and tax incentive programs. He said he will send that information to the TCRC/EDC. Another potential improvement, in addition to the building improvements, would be to have off street parking behind Westbrook Place.

8. Historic District Gateway Signage

J. Crawford explained there is a subcommittee that is working on the historic district gateway signage. DOT approval will be required for some of the sign approvals on State roads.

9. Minutes - January 13, 2022

Special Meeting
 JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
 AND TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
 Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
VIA ZOOM ONLY

D. Briggs made a motion to approve the January 13, 2022, TCRC/EDC Minutes as submitted. J. Crawford seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

10. Bills

TCRC		EDC	
Recording Secretary	\$ 49.40	Recording Secretary	\$ 49.40

J. Crawford made a motion to approve the bills as presented. P. Cocchiola seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment

D. Briggs made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting of the Town Center Revitalization Committee and the Economic Development Commission at 7:23 p.m. J. Crawford seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION:

1. Call to Order: J. Crawford called the meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 7:23 p.m.

2. Update on New Development Applications

P. Gillespie reported on the following:

- The Zoning Commission is reviewing a proposal to amend the Zoning Regulations to allow drive-up windows in some new zones. The Zoning Commission is still working on it. It may come back to the Planning Commission. Many Economic Development Commissions in other municipalities will sometimes advocate for applications for new businesses as they go through the land use commissions for approval. Members discussed this briefly.
- Met with the owner of the former Viking Motel, 756 Boston Post Road. The property is for sale. The former owner is looking to get that property redeveloped.
- 176 Boston Post Road was approved for a mixed-use project which includes some apartments and some commercial space.
- The former Key Bank is being renovated and has an addition for a package store.
- The former military museum located at 24 Westbrook Place was approved for a restaurant with an outdoor patio.
- The Brew Pub at 4 Grove Beach Road is moving forward.
- The Datillo multi-family project across from the Water's Edge is starting to move forward. They are interested in finalizing all of the Zoning Commission's conditions.

Special Meeting
JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
VIA ZOOM ONLY

- The Captain Stannard Inn is under new ownership. There have been conversations about what the new owners would like to do there. It was purchased by the owners of the Water's Edge.
- The Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the Town's Affordable Housing Plan on April 11, 2022.

3. FY2022-2023 Budget Request

J. Crawford reported that the budget submitted was a flat budget. There was discussion with the Board of Selectmen that there may be some new initiatives that may need additional funding now that the town has hired a Town Planner. The BOS was open to this.

M. Simon said the next Westbrook Events deadline is in May. J. Crawford suggested a celebratory article about summer being back in full swing and hyping the welcoming climate that Westbrook has for tourism and the local businesses.

M. Wick reported that she is on the Central Region Tourism Board, and they have an initiative called, "Every Town has a Story." Each town is creating a snippet about what makes them special. These snippets will go on the CT Visit web site. M. Wick said the snippet on Westbrook should be submitted to Westbrook Events. Commission members were very supportive of this idea. M. Wick will work with M. Simon.

4. Adjournment

J. Crawford adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE:

1. Call to Order

M. Ozols called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

2. FY2022-FY2023 Budget Request

M. Ozols said the budget went through as submitted to the Board of Selectmen. It goes to the Board of Finance next month. She explained that the budget for the maintenance of the Town Center Municipal Parking Area is being maintained at this time. They are working on another maintenance plan. The Garden Club submitted an article to Westbrook Events about the Town Center Municipal Parking Area suggesting people consider adopting a spot there.

3. Adopt a Spot

M. Ozols said this will be an ongoing program, but there is nothing to report at this time. Adopt a Spot will be managed through P. Gillespie's office from now on.

Special Meeting
JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
VIA ZOOM ONLY

M. Wick asked about the TCRC/EDC's involvement in events on the Town Green. Currently, these are mostly run by various organizations who take care of their own details.

4. **Adjournment**

The meeting of the Town Center Revitalization Committee was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen King, Recording Secretary