

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting June 17, 2020**

DATE: June 17, 2020  
TIME: 5:30 P.M.  
PLACE: Zoom meeting https # 84927338441

**Present**

Amy Suffredini  
Bob Reeve  
Rob Phillips- left at 6:15 PM  
Phil Chabot  
Dan Kleinman  
Bill Wadsworth  
John Karwoski  
Ed Giannaros

**Staff**

Rose Ponte

- a. **Call to Order**
  - a. Meeting was called to order by the Amy Suffredini at 5:30 pm
- b. **Public Comment- none noted**
- c. **MetroHartford Realty presentation regarding a text amendment to the Innovation Zone**

Geoff Sager and Kyle Richards reviewed with the Commission the history of the Innovation Zone. The Zone was created to allow developers to propose innovative projects in the area of UCONN Health and Jackson Labs. The zone approved by TPZ was written to address a very broad scope and did not contain specific regulations to guide developers. During discussions with Metro Realty, Town planning staff, expressed that the zone could be improved with certain text amendments, Metro Realty offered to recommend text amendments that could strengthen zone. Metro Realty is scheduled to go before TPZ to present the text amendments on June 22, 2020. During the presentation, Metro Realty explained to the EDC that they were not seeking a referral from them, rather they wanted to discuss the reasons for the amendments, so the EDC can be aware of the changes they were proposing. Metro Realty recently purchased property in the Innovation Zone from the Farmington Baptist Church Property. The property is located on Farmington Avenue and had been approved for a school. Metro will be proposing a project for this particular property and will return to the Commission to present their project and seek a positive referral from the Commission in the coming months.

**d. Reading of the Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded (Reeve / Kleinman) to accept the May 6, 2020

**a. The motion carried****e. Economic Development Report****(a) Personnel update- Planning Dept.**

Mark DeVoe has tendered his resignation, his last day of work is June 30, 2020. In the interim, Shannon Rutherford and Bruce Cyr will take the lead on projects in progress and new projects that will require approval from the TPZ Commission.

**(b) Business Breakfast Recap**

The EDC virtual Business Breakfast was held on June 3, 2020. Featured speakers were Governor Lamont and Dr. Agwunobi, president of UCONN Health. The breakfast was very well received. Rose Ponte will contact Mike Schweighoffer, her contact for the People's Bank's sponsorship to explore if EDC should consider a fall in person breakfast. If the Commission and People's Bank decide to move forward with the in-person event, it will also be offered virtually.

**(c) Rails to Trail Business Signage Initiative**

Rose explained that the Town Council had included initiatives in their strategic plan that would enhance Farmington's Rails to Trails. The Farmington Chamber of Commerce had been working on a project to add signage along the trails that would link users to local small businesses located along the trail. Commissioner Chabot explained that the Farmington Chamber was going to work with the Farmington HS to set up a project with HS students to design signage along the trails. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation stalled the project. Rose will continue to research this initiative and will report back to the commission.

**f. Town Council Report-**

Councilman Giannaros reported that the Town Council revised their proposed budget for 2020-2021 and approved a budget with a 0% tax increase. Councilman Giannaros also reported the Town Council has established a working group comprised of 2 council members, the Director of Social Services, the Police Chief and a representative from the Human Relations Commission. The purpose of the working group is to develop a charge for the Committee that will be formed in July. That committee will engage a cross section of the community for a conversation on racism, social injustice and the reputation of police departments nationwide and any relevant issues in Farmington.

**g. New Business**

Rose told the Commission about a special project that is currently underway call the Lemonade Stand for Change. Two children in town had made a Black Lives Matter sign and overnight it was vandalized. Their mother, along with Chelsea O'Donnell, have helped the children turn lemons into lemonade, the children will sell lemonade on Fridays in front of the Center Congregational Church and the money raised will buy books that celebrate diversity for the Farmington Libraries and the various Farmington School libraries. So far the virtual stand has raised over \$2500.00. Highland Park Market generously donated gift cards to defray the cost of supplies.

**h. Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded (Reeve / Kleinman) to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 PM.

**a. Motion Carried.**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Rose Ponte  
Economic Development Director  
CC: Economic Development Commissioners**