

ROUTE 6 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2010

CALL TO ORDER: 9:00 am by Joyce Stille

PLACE: Columbia Town Hall Meeting Room

ROLL CALL: Eric M. Trott (Planner – Town of Coventry); Terri-Ann Hahn (LADA, Land Planners); Carol Polsky (EDC – Town of Coventry); Lia Huang (CRCOG); Mark Waterhouse (Garnet Consulting Services, Inc); Robert Burbank (Selectman – Andover); Chris Korbel (LADA, Land Planners); John Pagini (Planner – Town of Bolton); Joyce Stille (Town Administrator – Bolton); Elaine Buchardt (EDC – Town of Andover); Carmen Vance (Selectman – Town of Columbia); Vera Englert (EDC – Town of Columbia); Neil McKeon (EDC – Town of Columbia)

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: No Comment.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Trott and seconded by Polsky to adopt the minutes of the January 25, 2010 meeting with the following modification: page 2 – paragraph 1 – property should be properly; paragraph 2 – add Interim at beginning of sentence. The motion passed unanimously, with Stille abstaining.

It was mentioned that Chick Shifrin regrettably will need to be replaced on the Council due to work schedule conflicts. Don Cianci also needs to be replaced due to the fact that he did not get selected as Selectman. The Council recognizes and appreciates the dedicated effort and time of both members.

Election of Officers will need to occur in March.

It was indicated that Town should be in the habit of posting agendas/minutes from the Council on individual Town websites.

CRCOG TRANSPORTATION STUDY:

Lia Huang from CRCOG reported that they are negotiating fees with the consultant and they should be on board in a couple of weeks. It will be necessary to scale back the project due to projected differences in cost and abilities for consultant to complete the required tasks.

DISCUSSION ON STEAP GRANT WITH CONSULTANT:

Mark Waterhouse distributed and reviewed the draft Economic Development Action Plan Agenda for the Council.

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The following is a summary of the discussion points and recommendations of the document.

Economic development opportunities exist with small office and manufacturing that can take advantage of the proximity to Hartford or Universities.

A single office/business park or free standing use is another option to consider.

'Drive by' uses – retail, service, food – with visual exposure could be conducive. A 'strip' type of development would need to be properly designed.

Residential or quasi residential uses are another consideration, such as assisted living or 1 to 2 bedroom units with low service demand.

A retail service leakage study would help to understand which uses may be supported by the communities. A consultant could be hired or ESRI information could be used.

Investment in a regional business park concept, within the context of a CEDS project/EDD District, is another concept. However, this idea has limitations due to State impediments.

Speculative building developments with 'virtual design' could be utilized. Computer aided imagery is necessary for this effort.

A cooperative marketing plan that is web based that includes newsletters, advertising and other information can be considered.

A unified zoning district and regulations adopted by individual Planning and Zoning Commissions will need to be implemented.

Uniform design guidelines also adopted by the individual Planning and Zoning Commissions will need to be implemented.

A RTE 6 beautification program/façade improvement program may help to improve the aesthetics of the region. STEAP money could be a source of assistance.

Community informational/educational program regarding the corridor and its needs could be facilitated by the Hartford Metro Alliance.

Developer's packages that include property prospectus could be created that provides helpful information on certain parcels.

A Corridor economic development incentive policy/tax deferment would be a helpful tool to attract development. A streamlined permit process for the Corridor developments would be helpful too.

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The key issue is who is going to carry out the various recommendations. Individual Town Staff, Boards or contracted professionals would be the likely candidates. The small business development center can provide some assistance, as well as the chambers of commerce.

The smart growth audit principles are to be applied throughout the corridor. A possible business park at the rte 6/44 intersection appears to be a good concept.

The following nodes are considered to be the best candidates:

Bolton – Rte 6/44 intersection area – possible business park, mixed use node, possible use of State land.

Andover – Historic center – provide streetscape enhancements – infill development with historic treatments.

Rte 6/66 – Possible ‘modern’ look – recognized as a gateway – possible roundabout location.

Traffic calming should be applied at all nodes and gateways.

It was noted that the site analysis map must be considered in relation to the natural resources mapping.

The smart growth principles were reviewed. Items #1-8 are relative to DECD, responsible growth criteria. Items #9-15 are ‘industry’ concepts. Item #16 is suggested by LADA.

NEXT MEETING DATE/AGENDA: The next meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2010 at 9:00am in the Columbia Town Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:40am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric M. Trott

Secretary