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**Town of Seymour  
Economic Development Commission**

**Special Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 27, 2012 – 6:30 PM  
Flaherty Room – Seymour Town Hall**

Members present: Jon Szuch, Rosalie Averill, Michael Horbal, Ted Holly, Ron Balabon Marietta Sabetta and Kathleen Conroy-Cass.

Also present: Fred Messore - Economic Development Director;  
Glenn Chalder - Planimetrics and Maryanne DeTullio, Recording Secretary

**ITEM #1 Call Meeting to Order**

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairman Jon Szuch.

**ITEM #2 Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Jon Szuch.

**ITEM #3 Meeting with Planimetrics regarding 2012 MEDP update and discussion.**

Fred Messore stated that this is the first meeting with the whole Board after having the contract in place with Planimetrics. They were hired to prepare the action plan based off of the MEDP that was done in 2007. They will be doing a review of that and incorporating an action for the downtown area. He stated that Glenn Chalder and his team were here last week and did a walking tour of the area. Mr. Messore stated that they met and discussed what they found in the walking tour. They spoke with some business owners, property owners and municipal departments. Mrs. Averill asked who was there from town and Mr. Messore stated that he was and Bob Looker

Glenn Chalder, Planimetrics stated that they met with Fred Messore and Bob Looker and walked around downtown. He had with him two of their senior planners and their GIS person. He stated that they took a lot of photos of the area and have been having discussions in the office on what they saw and ideas that they have. He stated that he spoke with Fred Messore and Bob Looker about what has been happening since the MEDP was done in 2007. He stated that he wanted to get their perspective on the expectations for this process. He stated that he wanted to layout what they see as being the schedule and the activities that are going to occur along the way; get feedback from the members in terms of their expectations for the process. He also wanted to talk about preparations. He stated that they feel it is important to meet with downtown merchants and property owners and to have a public meeting to get community feedback and input.

Mr. Chalder stated that they did not originally plan on having a merchant's meeting but during the walk through they learned a lot and feel that it is important to have that meeting. The merchants suggested Wednesday mornings before 10:00 a.m. He stated that the public meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>. He stated that we need to figure out the location for the meeting and what they would do to generate interest in the meeting.

Mr. Chalder asked about what the members felt were the expectations for the process. He stated that one thing that he felt was helpful in a situation like this is to put yourself five or ten years in the future and you have been away from Seymour and come back and see things that are different and have changed. He stated that an action plan leads to action and he asked what they felt those actions were.

Mr. Szuch stated that he felt they were development and revitalization of older areas. He also mentioned expansion of newer areas and infrastructure. Mrs. Averill stated that she felt it was funneling of funds. Mr. Chalder asked what the members felt were things that were holding the town back from these things today. Mr. Szuch stated that it was lack of quality personnel in certain places to implement the plans. Mrs. Averill stated that she felt that everyone is not of the same page. She did not feel that there was a meeting of the minds on mass transit. Mr. Szuch stated that he felt there was a fear of change. Mrs. Conroy-Cass stated that she did not think that the downtown merchants feel that was. Mr. Chalder stated that when they were walking through downtown one issue that they found was the parking situation. Mrs. Averill asked if it was a lack of enforcement. Mr. Chalder stated that he was not sure. He stated that they walked around and tried to see how things are working. Mr. Balabon asked about putting in parking meters and if that would help the situation. Mr. Chalder stated that it is a little for that. He stated that they are going to come back out and count the spaces and find out how many spaces are available. He stated that meters are not really user friendly. He stated that they feel parking is a key issue and it may not be the number of spaces but the distribution of spaces. Mrs. Averill asked if it might be beneficial to look at the uses. Mrs. Conroy-Cass stated that there has always been a parking issue in the downtown area. Mr. Chalder stated that they will look at the number of spaces but parking is not the only issue that there is.

Mr. Chalder stated that the Town has the first Saturday events which is a niche for the downtown area with the antiques and the auction. He stated that one thing to look at was how to generate additional activities in this area. He stated that the more activities that can be coalesced together, the more interest there is and the more activity there is.

The Commission also discussed aesthetics in the downtown and how to enhance that. Ms. Sabetta stated that there may be a need for some type of aesthetics code. The downtown area has looked the same for a long time. Mr. Szuch stated that there is no formal aesthetic codes in town but people want the historic themes with some modern flair. Mr. Chalder stated that this could be an opportunity to make some suggestions regarding this. He stated that these could be done on an advisory basis. He also stated that the State of Connecticut statutes allow for a village district. Mr. Szuch stated that this was proposed several years ago but there was no interest from Planning and Zoning. He stated that he has a lot of information on that. Mr. Chalder stated with the public meeting they are looking to generate public interest and public support for things like that.

Mr. Chalder asked when the last time there was a proposal for new construction in the downtown area. Mr. Horbal stated that it was a number of years ago. Mr. Chalder

asked how that process went. He asked if the land use process was working the way we would want it to. Mr. Szuch stated that he felt it works better for residential than commercial and retail. Mr. Horbal stated that commercial was taboo for a long time. He stated that commercial development coming along now is having a fairly easy process. He stated that the town has to follow the regulations but not too many developers complain. Mr. Horbal felt that one of the biggest problems is that the Town does not own any properties or have any control over any properties in the downtown area. He stated that any change falls to the property owners who want to make changes. Mr. Szuch stated that the town has just adopted a tax incentive program. Mr. Chalder asked if the town has a façade improvement program and Mr. Szuch stated that there isn't one. Mr. Szuch stated that there are ordinances but not always enforced. He stated that it is a matter of cleaning up and adding aesthetics.

Mr. Chalder stated what the biggest problem is and Mr. Szuch felt it was parking and aesthetics. He stated that there are blighted properties and nothing is being done with those. Mrs. Averill asked what they saw on their walk. Mr. Chalder stated that they saw issues but also saw opportunities. He stated that some things start with small steps. He asked if there was anything like a downtown clean up day. Ms. Sabetta stated that Seymour has a very good citizens group with Seymour Pride. They are having a river clean up day in April. Mr. Szuch felt that it would be beneficial for Mr. Chalder to meet with chairmen of other commissions and the town planner and the land use boards and ask them what they would like to see and ask them the same questions that he is asking this Commission. Mr. Chalder stated that right now he would like to reach out to the business owners and community. He stated that he has a feel from this Commission on what they would like to see. He stated that once they have the ideas and strategy he finds it is good to bring those to the public. Mr. Szuch stated that he should meet with Fred Messoro and the First Selectman. Mr. Chalder stated that he would be important to have the meeting with the First Selectman before the public meeting but would hold off on the meeting with the other boards. He stated that they will send out an e-mail to the members of the boards and commissions prior to the public meeting.

Mr. Messoro asked about comparing Seymour to other towns. Mr. Szuch stated that the residents have said that they would like to be more like Southbury and Shelton.

Mr. Chalder stated that with the antiques in the downtown area there is an opportunity to get more people into town. He stated that most of the buildings in the downtown area are smaller and it would be difficult to compete against big places but could create a niche with the antiques. He stated that you could also look to take advantage of the River. The Commission also spoke about getting more restaurants and things in town to attract people. He suggested speaking with someone in the business and find out what the situation is for putting a restaurant in the downtown area.

Mr. Chalder stated that the public meeting will be held on April 24, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. He stated that he will work with Mr. Messoro on picking a location for the meeting. He stated that he would like to start getting out the signs and advertise the meeting. He asked what could be put on the signs to intrigue people to show up and speak at the meeting. The Commission was in agreement to have Seymour Your Vision for Downtown and advertise it as an open community meeting.

Mr. Chalder stated that he will also work with Mr. Messore on setting up the meeting with the downtown merchants.

Mr. Chalder stated that he felt he covered the basics of the issues that he wanted to go over with the Commission. He stated that he got input and feedback about downtown. He felt that the next key events will be the meeting that he has with Mr. Messore and the First Selectman. The meeting with the merchants and then the public meeting. He also stated that there will be reaching out to the board and commissions.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mrs. Averill, seconded by Mr. Holly and carried unanimously (7-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. by Chairman Jon Szuch.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryanne DeTullio, Recording Secretary