

**Town of Seymour
Economic Development Department**

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**Minutes
Tuesday, August 2, 2011 – 7:00 PM
Flaherty Room – Seymour Town Hall**

Members present: Jon Szuch, Ted Holly, Rosalie Averill, Marietta Sabetta and Mike Horbal

Members not present: Ron Balabon, Kathleen Conroy-Cass

Also present: Fred Messore Economic Development Director, First Selectman Paul Roy

ITEM #1 Call Meeting to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairman Jon Szuch.

ITEM #3 First Selectman Comments

First Selectman Paul Roy was not in attendance at this point in the meeting.

ITEM #4 Public Comments

There was no one from the public present wishing to speak.

Item #5 Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – July 5, 2011 EDC Meeting.

Mrs. Averill moved that the minutes of the July 5, 2011 meeting be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sabetta and carried unanimously (4-0-1 with Mr. Horbal abstaining). Chm. Szuch noted that he was not officially informed of the appointment of Kathleen Conroy-Cass to the Commission at the time of this meeting and did not know when it was effective.

ITEM #6 Update TonSha Marketing - Sharon Grodzicki

Sharon Grodzicki presented a report dated August 2, 2011 (copy attached) and stated that she met with Fred Messore and brought him up to date on what has been done with the work she has been doing for the Commission. She also stated that the letter that was to be sent out to the businesses in town has not been mailed yet since the First Selectman wanted to update his letter that was to be included in the mailing. Fred Messore stated that it should be out within the next few weeks. He also stated that the letter from the First Selectman is really to just introduce him as the new Economic Development Director. The commission felt the letterhead needs to be updated to include Fred Messore and his contact information as well as removing Joe Cass (deceased) as a member of the Commission and adding the new Commissioner. The members felt that it would not be appropriate to send out the letter on the old letterhead and that it should be redone on updated letterhead. Mr. Messore stated that he has not gotten his town issued cell phone yet and therefore has not had business cards printed. Sharon Grodzicki stated that it seems that the consensus is that the sample sheets about the real estate are not necessary and nothing will be done with that.

Sharon stated that she spoke with Fred Messore about putting the real estate on the website and Mr. Messore stated that for his own employer Colonial Properties he uses CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center) and he would speak with someone there about putting the Seymour properties on through them.

Mrs. Averill asked Mr. Messore if he would be sending out welcome letters to new businesses in Seymour. She also asked if he would be sending a letter to Griffin Hospital regarding their soon to be presence in Seymour at Klarides Village. Mr. Messore stated that he thought it would be a good idea to send out a welcome letter. He has spoken with Griffin Hospital about doing a press release. They still have a lot of work to do before the doctor's offices are opened and when it is ready to open a press release will be done.

The Commission discussed new letterhead and business cards for Mr. Messore. Mrs. Averill stated that she felt that the cost of his letterhead and business cards should come out of his own ED Department budget. Mr. Szuch stated that he should have a budget of \$4,000.00 and he needs to get a copy of his budget from the First Selectman. It was decided to hold off on his letterhead and just do the revised letterhead for the ED Commission. The cost of the letterhead would be \$275.00 and an invoice for that will be sent from TonSha and Mr. Szuch will sign off on it. Mrs. Averill moved to authorize a purchase order for up to \$300.00 for letterhead. The motion was seconded by Mr. Horbal and carried unanimously.

ITEM #7 ED Director and/or Assistant's Report

Mr. Messore presented his report for his activities since the last meeting. He stated that he met with the owner and developer of Housatonic Wire. They discussed the demolition of the current structure that was damaged in the fire September 11, 2010 nearly 1 year ago and the potential remediation that may be necessary. He stated that the Seymour First Selectman, Corporation Counsel and two representatives from the CT State Department of Economic/Community Development all met. They discussed funding for the cleanup and how to go about putting together a financial instrument that would protect the town's interest. Mrs. Averill asked if there was a time frame for this. Mr. Messore stated that this is just for the funding and if the funding goes in place then a contract will be drawn between the owner and the contractor who will do the demolition. He stated that they also took a tour of the property. He felt that the meeting went very well and there should be some activity at the property.

Mr. Messore stated that he met with different department heads in town that he will be dealing with. He met with Bob Looker and felt that it was a good meeting. He stated that he told him that he wanted to be more proactively involved with his department and the land use agencies that he deals with.

Mr. Messore stated that he went to an emergency meeting with the Police Department following the July 8, 2011 storms that affected Seymour.

He also attended a meeting with the Governor and Catherine Smith, the new Commissioner of Economic/Community Development. He stated that he was able to introduce himself to them and hopefully be able to build a relationship with her Department.

Mr. Messore stated that he attended the Valley Council of Government meeting and met with Rick Dunne. He stated that he discussed Seymour's position on conference of economic strategy. He stated that Seymour is in the process of updating its Plan of development. He also stated that he met with Howard Enquist to discuss his property on Derby Avenue. He stated that they discussed his previous marketing history and what he would like to do in the future. He stated that he also had a meeting with Jon Szuch and the First Selectman and everyone's role going forward and how we can work with each other to develop a unified

message for economic development. He stated that he also met with Mike Horbal to discuss any projects that Mr. Horbal is involved with.

Mr. Messore stated that he attended the CEDAS meeting, which is the Connecticut Economic Development Association. He stated that he will be joining as a representative of Seymour. He stated that he felt that Seymour should be more actively involved and also felt that the Commission should consider joining.

Mr. Messore stated that he attended a TOD pilot meeting for Valley Council of Government. TOD stands for Transit Oriented Development and the meeting was to discuss a federal application that they are in the process of putting together. This would be for feasibility funding for certain projects that have a transit oriented development plan in place. There are only two Valley towns that have train stations in their official downtowns, Ansonia and Seymour and he stated that Seymour may be able to get priority for funding for a feasibility study. He stated that in Seymour he would like to put a plan together that would discuss the location of the current train station and also some future train station. He felt that the current one should be discussed now and concentrate on that location and get funds for feasibility study. This study could incorporate an area to the west to Housatonic Wire and east to Kerite and also look at properties that are under utilized. Mr. Horbal asked if in the study it could be included the possibility of moving the train station to another location. Mr. Messore said that in order to make the application strong that would not be viable. He stated that there is no official planning in place to relocate the Seymour train station so a new one could not be included in the application. Mr. Horbal stated that when the issue of moving the train station was discussed a shortage of parking was identified as one of the main problems. They had felt that by moving the train station it would free up a lot of parking spaces that could be used by the merchants in town. Mr. Messore stated that he understood that but felt that it would be easier to create more parking than to move a train station.

Mr. Messore stated that he toured the Chatfield/LoPresti School renovation project. He stated that he also met with Sharon Grodzicki from TonSha on the website and marketing brochures.

Mr. Messore stated that he also met with Connie Maffeo from CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center) and got some packets of information which he left at the Assessor's Office. The packet includes information for someone wishing to open up a new business. He also received a letter from them about joining and what the fee would be to do that. He stated that the Town was a member of this and the membership just expired and could be renewed. He passed this information along to the First Selectman. He also stated that he felt that a better way to market properties in Seymour would be through CERC.

He stated that he met with Mr. Maiorano regarding his property on Roosevelt Drive. He stated that it is a large parcel that he will be interested in marketing shortly.

Mr. Messore stated that he made a copy of the charter and highlighted what the role of the ED Commission is and what the objectives should be. He stated that now that he is on board as the Director of the ED Department, the EDC should get back to the role that it should have. He stated that Bob Looker is waiting for comments on land use areas that could be changed to spur economic development in Seymour. He stated that Planning and

Zoning Commission will be working on updating the plan of conservation and development and are waiting for comments from the Commission. He also stated that the Economic Development Commission is an advisory board for things that promote economic development. They have no legislative power. He stated that they have been asked to provide guidelines for the Town of Seymour 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development which would help promote the Town. He felt that should be a priority of the Commission so that they can move forward with dialog with land use boards.

Mr. Horbal stated that Planning and Zoning is coming to the point where they are mandated to update the Plan of Conservation and Development. There are some areas that EDC could work on with them. Mr. Szuch stated that the Commission should take an active role in recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission in an advisory role and get some positive changes for economic development. First Selectman Roy stated that he would like to see ideas from this Commission about updating the Plan. Mr. Messore stated that the Commission will make the recommendations and he will add his input.

ITEM #8 Update – continue EDC discussion on EDC to consider making recommendations of changes to Seymour P&Z for updating Town of Seymour Plan of Development.

Mr. Horbal stated that he has been looking at the zoning regulations of the Town and in particular there are three or four areas that he felt changes should be made. There are areas where landowners of larger commercial properties have asked about. He stated that he also discussed this with Bob Looker Town Planner and John Fanotto Chairman of the Seymour Sewer Authority. He stated that there are specifically four areas that need to be addressed. He stated that some things have already been started and one of those is about signage. This is a big item with business owners. He stated that there is a real effort to update the signage regulations and this has been done by Bob Looker and Jim Baldwin the P&Z Chairman.

Mr. Horbal stated that another area that he thought has a lot of potential and has been crippled is the Route 34 RC-3 District. He stated that in his discussions with Bob Looker Town Planner too much of that area has been zoned commercial. He stated that the RC-3 District which stands for recreational/commercial properties has a lot of prohibitions. He stated that another item that needs to be addressed on Route 34 is the need for a sewer system. He stated that a lot of commercial owners asked about that and it would enhance commercial growth. He stated that there are a lot of properties on Route 34 that are very close to the river and cannot grow because of the limitations of the river, the aquifer and lack of sewers. He stated that he would like for the ED Commission to form a sub-committee to work with Fred Messore and move it along at a faster pace. This would be to formulate a list of recommendations to bring to the EDC that would ultimately bring to the P&Z Commission and the Seymour town administration. He stated that this would include zone changes, signage, revising the zone lines, sewers and any other areas but felt that those were the 4 key areas. Mrs. Averill stated that the Commission did send a letter to the Sewer Authority regarding this issue several times but no response was ever received. She stated that sewers are essential to businesses and they cannot expand because they do not have additional land and without sewers nothing can happen on Route 34. Mr. Messore stated that he felt that everyone felt the same way and the Commission was pro-active in sending the letter in the past. He felt that the most pro-active thing to do is to get the language updated in the Plan of Conservation and Development so that the Town could revert back to

that document and then possibly go after some state or federal funding. He stated that it is important to get the Town of Seymour Plan of Conservation and Development updated.

Mr. Horbal stated that the town needs to get all departments on board with this. He stated that in the past the Seymour Sewer Authority was asked to make an agreement with the City of Derby to expand the sewers and this was not done. He stated that there are now private developers talking about working on this. Mr. Messore stated that sewers are a vital part of the development and should be in the Plan. First Selectman Roy stated that this is very important to economic development in Seymour and he is on board with this. He stated that Seymour could go to VCOG and they will help find funding for this type of project. Mr. Messore stated that it is important to identify this and it needs to be in the updated Plan.

The Commission discussed the zoning on Route 34 and Chm. Szuch stated that he would like to see condominiums or townhouses across from the river into the hillsides as done in Shelton or Milford and commercial on the lower levels. He felt that a lot of the property could be developed and terraced with residential dwellings. Mr. Horbal stated that he would like more commercial or condominiums as well. Mr. Messore stated that the zoning is outdated and it needs to be made more marketable.

Mrs. Averill moved that a three member sub-committee be appointed to review and make recommendations to the EDC for updates to the Plan of Conservation and Development and report back to the EDC by the November meeting.

ITEM #10 EDC Chairman's Report. Chm. Szuch stated that the 3-member sub-committee shall be Commissioner's Mike Horbal, Rosalie Averill and Marietta Sabetta.

ITEM #9 DARP – EDC concept discussion continuation on Derby Avenue Rehabilitation Project

First Selectman Roy stated that there was some type of concept for this from Chairman Szuch back in 2005-2006 and the Town could try and get some funding for planning if we can elaborate on the plan with greater detail in writing. Mrs. Averill asked if the Commission could take all the information that was done previously with the maps and use that. Chm. Szuch felt that could be done somewhat but that a new 2011-12 approach should be taken as well as it has been 5-6 years since the original concept was conceived. Mr. Horbal stated that the Commission needs to start with a concept. Mr. Messore stated that DARP should be one of the priorities and once it is identified as a priority could go to VCOG and present it to them and ask for help in getting funding. Mr. Messore stated it is important that many ideas and recommendations regarding different projects and different areas of town are in the 2012 revised Town of Seymour Plan of Conservation and Development and then they will have to be addressed. Chm. Szuch stated that Commissioner's Ted Holly, Ron Balabon, Kathleen Conroy-Cass could work on DARP. He stated that he will work with them and so will Fred Messore. It was decided to table this until the new member is present at the September EDC meeting.

ITEM #10 – EDC Chairman's Report

Chm. Szuch stated that he had a meeting with Fred Messore and felt that it was a good meeting and that everyone has a strong passion to have Seymour developed properly and cleaned up aesthetically. He stated that there are some issues in Town that need to be

taken care of. He stated that there are areas of town that have blight issues regarding filth and weeds in many areas and that those need to be addressed by senior town management and paid town employees as other towns address those issues. He also was concerned about the upkeep of publicly owned town properties such as parks and schools and the fact that in his opinion they are not properly taken care of aesthetically with routine maintenance with regards to their landscaping of school fields, shrubbery beds, parks regarding trimming, weeding and straightening crooked signage.

ITEM #11 – Old Business

Mr. Horbal asked if anyone knew how much space Auto Zone took. Mr. Holly stated that they did not take the entire space from the former Walgreen's and believed it could be 7500 sqft. Mr. Horbal stated that he wanted to make sure that the Commission knew that there was more leasable space available there approximately 3000-4000 sqft remaining.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ted Holly, seconded by Marietta Sabetta and carried unanimously (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. by Chairman Jon Szuch.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryanne DeTullio, Recording Secretary