

Town of Seymour
Economic Development Workshop Meeting
March 31, 2008 @ 7:30 PM
Seymour Town Hall/Norma Drummer Room

MEDP Members Present: Chairman, John Conroy, Jr., Keith Robinson, Robin Imbrogno-Greenfield, Steve Plotkin, and Michael Horbal @ 8:35 PM.

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman, Robert J. Koskelowski, John Conroy, Jr., and Paul Roy.

Economic Development: Chairman, Jon David Szuch, and Michael Horbal.

Planning & Zoning Present: Chairman, Clifford Strumello, Alfred Yagovane, and Bill Paecht.

Inland Wetlands Commission Present: Chairman, Steve Plotkin, and Peter Jezierny.

Economic Director Present: John Criscuolo and Nancy Onofrio.

Others Present: Tom Haynes, Kathy Ekstrom, Trisha Danka, and Brian Koskelowski.

- Chairman, John Conroy, Jr., opened the meeting @ 7:37 PM.
- Everyone Saluted the Flag and stated the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM # 2 - Introductory Remarks: First Selectman.

First Selectman workshop is to provide an overview of what they would like to see happen in the Town of Seymour as far as economic growth.

ITEM # 3 – Update on Current Projects & Initiatives: Economic Development Director. John Crisuolo provided updates on the following:

- CVS
- Walgreen's
- Soliciting local business' for their input
- Started Downtown Merchants Meetings
- Meeting with people from Industrial Park
- Has meeting scheduled with Kerite
- Working on retaining business' currently in Seymour
- Sending out Economic Development proposals to corporations (Olive Garden, Trader Joe's, Hess Oil Corp, etc.)
- Attraction of business to vacant sites in the Industrial Park
- We have been pursuing contacts with various Commercial Realtors
- Attending Board meetings & will attend any meeting to give updates.
- Nancy Onofrio is the new Economic Secretary. Together they have been going out and meeting with local business' and have meet with Department of Economic & Development for the State, Labor Dept, CERC.

- Attention of the press
- Stick to what the Economic Development Plan calls for by focusing on the Downtown area and the rest of the Town.
- Established communication with the owner of Tri Town Plaza and working on attracting business into the vacant buildings.

The potential Haynes project on the property accessed via Franklin Street was discussed by members of the Boards:

- Access road along side of Stop & Shop connecting Rte 67 in Seymour to Route 42 in Beacon Falls would need to be installed
- \$750,000 Grant has been initiated
- Property could be used for mixed use
- Possibly move Train Station to that location
- Greenway walking trail connecting Seymour to Beacon Falls
- Constructing an on and off ramp to Route 8 to reduce traffic flow off Route 67 possibly installing this in Beacon Falls.

Other projects:

- Day Street Bridge is to begin on April 1, 2008
- The Town was awarded two Steap Grants in the amount of \$150,000 for Sochrins Dam and \$150,000 for Sidewalk Repairs.

ITEM # 4 - Update on Economic Development Commission 2008 initiatives: EDC Chairman.

Jon Szuch discussed the 2008 EDC marketing plan:

- April 2008 – Hold 2nd annual EDC Forum
- May 2008 – Hold & coordinate 2nd annual Local Business Establishment
- Prepare 2008 questionnaire this summer to go out in the fall
- Update EDC video
- Downtown Seymour Streetscapes

Jon also discussed the importance of locating the main pockets of the main entrances in the Town of Seymour and that's what sells people when they approach the Town. This is why Streetscapes is critical to the Town and we need to have people and companies with Engineering and Architectural background known for doing these types of things.

Jon stated that the EDC had tried with Tri Town Plaza and Jon is confident that something is going to take place there; it is just a matter of time. In 2005 we had Bob Stoker with Wal-Mart here and they clearly are still looking at that site. The Haynes project has tremendous potential and that's the long range future for Seymour. Moving the Train Station, Seymour Falls type of plaza, Walkway Trails, and mixed used. Derby Avenue should be the next Bridgeport Avenue of the Valley.

ITEM # 5 – Group Discussion Topics:

5a - Best process for joint informational session among the various cognizant boards and commissions including where applicable emergency services, at the front end of any

large or complex projects, both to identify issues and barriers as well as to develop the appropriate review process.

- The Board members thought this is a good idea however all the Land use Boards are under Connecticut State Statute with limitations as to what can review and do in advance of a public hearing and meeting the statutory guidelines. With this there wouldn't be any decision making or any talk of what may be decided in a future meeting
- To share information with all the Boards at the developmental stage and to understand what the various issues this would be to make the project work.
- Possibly bring other Boards from other Towns together when project will be in two Towns.
- Possibly go through process of zone changes.

5b – Discussion of the types of issues and potential zoning changes required in the development of certain high potential sites here in town (NH Copper, Derby Ave corridor; Franklin Street property; existing Walgreen's Store in downtown).

New Haven Copper:

- Has been vacant since the close
- Look at potential opportunities
- What is the property zoned at today
- Consider possible zone changes
- Look at barriers & obstacles
- Concern was mentioned over maintenance of this property
- Property could be used for mix, professional building, & restaurant
- P& Z Chair believes property has potential and the Commission would be receptive to anything plan

Economic Development Director has sent out a letter to Olin Corp with no response. First Selectman, Robert J. Koskelowski has sent a letter to Olin Corp regarding assisting in helping securing Federal Funding for the Environmental issues on the property and at this point the First Selectman has not had a response.

The Town will continue to pursue Olin Corp as to what their plans are.

Update on the Fish-by-Pass:

The State of Connecticut has hired a company to design a plan which was sent to the State in December. The State has 90 to 120 days to review the plan should any changes need to be made then it goes back to the company for these changes once changes have been made it is then sent back to the State.

Walgreens:

- Economic Development Director is focusing on placing someone in the plaza
- Currently the Economic Director has tried to make contact with the owner of the plaza with no response possibly due to the fact that Walgreen's has not officially notified the owner of their intention to move.

5c – How to best implement a standard “cost / benefit” analysis process that takes into account all elements that may be impacted by a particular project, such as infrastructure, quality of life, spin-off benefits, etc.

- Economic cost to the Town
- Will the Town be responsible to pay part of the cost for infrastructure improvement
- Look at what other Towns are doing to provide Economic Development to the area such as Blue Back Square in West Hartford, CT. That Town took out special purpose financing for \$40 Million Dollars for this project and in doing this the Town got the Parking rights and parking revenues along with service fees from the Condos and stores. With the benefits of this the Town brings in 40% in excess of the debt service every year with property taxes. The Town got involved at the beginning of the project and looked at all the pieces and between the bank, developer and the municipal financing they figured out they had to change a lot of the streets, the traffic patterns and they made it all work. With this information maybe a template like Blue Back Square would be helpful.
- Finance Chair believes it is crucial to do a cross benefit analysis when you want to move the Town from re-active to pro-active this is the best way to get community to see benefits
- With each project that comes along will need to be tweaked a little to make it work

5d – Possible improvements that can be made in our existing processes, including communications, to aid in our overall efforts and responsibilities.

- How to communicate to the public
- Look for attractive land to develop a recreational center for the community
- Direct mailing
- Create signage into the Streetscape
- Use of Website
- Work to keep the Town at 25% commercial and 75% residential

ITEM # 6 – Adjourn @ 9:10 PM.

Submitted by,

Approved Via Email by,

Denise Powell,
Recording Secretary

John Conroy, Jr.,
Chairman