



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting, Special Time, Tuesday August 25, 2020, 6:00 p.m.
Shepardson Community Center**

Present: Commissioner David Cappelletti
Chairman Terrence McAuliffe
Commissioner Anthony Minchella
Commissioner Frank Mirovsky
Commissioner Armando Paolino

Also Present: Curt Bosco
Terry Smith
Linda Zukauskas (ZOOM)

Absent: Commissioner Mark Petrucci
Commissioner Ted Mannello

CALL TO ORDER

While waiting for a quorum, Chairman McAuliffe used the large screen monitor to demonstrate the Economic Development Facebook page and the Economic Development Commission (EDC) web site.

McAuliffe used a laptop computer and camera to record it on ZOOM. (The ZOOM session cut off midway during the restaurant discussion due to technical issues.)

The meeting was called to order at about 6:11 pm when a quorum of members was reached. Pledge of allegiance was said by all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Anthony Minchella MOTIONED to approve the July 28 minutes, SECOND by Frank Mirovsky and unanimously voted.

DISCUSSION

Celebrate Middlebury committee members Terry Smith and Curtis Bosco discussed possibilities to promote the Middlebury restaurants. Smith, Bosco and McAuliffe were on the committee and agreed to pursue such a promotion when the 2020 Celebrate Middlebury fair was canceled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

McAuliffe said the discussion would focus on what could reasonably be done within budget and energy constraints to help the restaurants. The idea of an indoors restaurant tasting was dismissed due to Corona-19 restrictions, and an outside event wasn't pursued due to weather and parking restrictions. Also discussed was the concept of an outdoor theater but was not pursued.

Smith suggested a "restaurant week," where participating restaurants offered a "special" and the concept would be heavily promoted in all media with the help of town funds and restaurant contributions. Smith encouraged a "keep it simple" approach to get it done quickly with least complications.

Bosco said many of Middlebury's twenty-four restaurants had worked hard to conform to restrictions allowing them to offer indoor and outdoor dining, so it would be best to exploit that work. So, instead of a "come to a common venue" event it would be a "go to them" promotion, encouraging people to visit the restaurants which had worked hard to be open.

Also discussed were concepts of games, contests, hidden clues, passport, scavenger hunts, etc. Smith suggested different categories restaurants would have different promotions at different price points and menus.

Smith cautioned about overcomplicating the promotion as a first effort, keeping it limited to extensive promotion, to Middlebury residents and surrounding towns. McAuliffe said all twenty-four restaurants must be asked to participate, even if they didn't choose to participate.

David Cappelletti commented that bringing the restaurants together was less the job of EDC than that of Parks & Recreation (P&R), Senior Center and Library.

Bosco and Smith proposed bringing the restaurant promotion effort back to the Celebrate Middlebury committee, in cooperation with P&R. McAuliffe commented that Bosco and Smith had established a good relationship with the restaurants, as part of the Reopen Connecticut initiative, knew most of the owners, and were in the best position to organize an agreeable promotion. They said they would ask P&R director Betsy Anderson to reconvene the Celebrate Middlebury weekly meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

Commercial Development Guide

McAuliffe said fifty copies of the revised for 2020 Commercial Development Guide had been printed and are now stocked at the Town Clerk, Land Use, Selectmens, and Zoning Enforcement offices.

Website Issues Status

McAuliffe said Middlebury CFO Robin Stanziale had been given the job of transferring the town website from in-house to a vendor. As part of that effort, the EDC website, its requirements, and matters of EDC interest would be coordinated with her, a process Stanziale said would take a long time.

Comparison of commercial property leases and rents – status

Mark Petrucci was not available to report.

Research Comparative study grease trap regulations

David Cappelletti, who took on the study at the July meeting, asked for background and clarification. McAuliffe said the issue was brought up in EDC's 2017 business survey. The complaint was that the cost of complying to such regulations in Middlebury was a lot higher than other towns, and that higher cost could keep restaurants from locating in Middlebury. McAuliffe said he wanted to have that data available and be able to say that EDC had followed up on complaints and found answers and possibly solved the problem.

After much discussion on how to find this information, Bosco volunteered to give an overview from his work as Zoning Enforcement Officer. He said Middlebury, Oxford and Naugatuck were part of a district sewer system, using a treatment plant owned by Naugatuck. Oxford has a gravity system while Middlebury is lower, requiring expensive pump stations that were recently updated. He said Middlebury has higher standards to limit grease from entering the pump stations and into the treatment plant, and those standards are strictly interpreted and enforced. Bosco provided examples of capacities, maintenance, oversight, and other costly factors. He said all existing buildings have the necessary traps and new buildings will know to incorporate them, adding that having the traps in new construction was far cheaper than retrofitting into older buildings.

After more discussion on approaches and workarounds, McAuliffe said he would accept a one or two page report that summarized the factors involved in grease

trap regulation conformance and explained the reason why Middlebury might be more expensive and the options available. This would provide findings and close the issue. Anthony Minchella said he would meet with a subset of current restaurants and ask them if they had been influenced by grease trap costs. He said he would provide that data to Cappelletti.

Commission Name Revision

McAuliffe said the commission name had originally been Economic and Industrial Development Commission when started in 1962 because of Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) at that time. It was not changed to Economic Development Commission when the CGS was amended in 1965. He said he had received an OK from the Board of Selectmen to informally change the name to Economic Development Commission to conform to CGS and be the same as most other towns. The name could be formally changed in the next Charter Revision.

To formalize the change Anthony Minchella MOTIONED to informally change the name as proposed, SECOND by David Cappelletti and unanimously voted.

NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming meeting guests

Several possible guests were discussed, including State Senator Joan Hartley and certain commercial brokers.

ADJOURNMENT

Anthony Minchella MOTIONED to adjourn, SECOND by David Cappelletti and unanimously voted at about 7:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrence McAuliffe

Chairman—Economic Development Commission

cc. Town Clerk, Barbara Whitaker, Commission Members