



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

Economic Development Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes, Monday, August 28, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.
Meadowview Park Pavilion
(approved)

Present:

Chairman Terrence McAuliffe
Commissioner Jesse Langer
Commissioner Frank Mirovsky
Commissioner Nicole Griffin
Commissioner Mark Petrucci

Also present Brian Godin, Godin Property Brokers

Excused Commissioner Armando Paolino

Absent Commissioner David Cappelletti

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McAuliffe called the meeting to order at about 6:40 pm with roll call and pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Frank Mirovsky MOTIONED to approve the June 26, 2023 meeting minutes, SECOND by Jesse Langer and unanimously voted.

DISCUSSION

Brian Godin introduced himself and gave a brief summary of his Commercial Real Estate business which he jointly owns with his brother Edward and two partners for about nine years. He focuses on retail and office while his brother focuses on industrial. The office is located at 850 Straits Turnpike near Post University. He said there is minimal industrial property opportunities in Middlebury, but smaller retail activity is good. He noted that there are no large retail spaces available.

He said he remembered it being much harder to do business in Middlebury in 2006, but now the town is more receptive. He talked about the new Subaru dealership which took about two and a half years to get done. Mentioning a zoning change necessary for Subaru, which he expected to be difficult, he said

the town officials took the applicants by the hand and walked them through the steps.

He said in general Middlebury has a good reputation and a lot of people want to do business here. The mil rate is decent, compared to Waterbury, and the town is business friendly. He agreed that Middlebury being "safe" helped attract businesses. He agreed that Middlebury is an "upscale town".

He said that other towns do not provide the help necessary for businesses, but Middlebury does. He specifically mentioned and complimented Ed St. John and Curt Bosco who took the incoming phone calls and made sure inquiries were always welcomed, answered, and handed properly. He called it "the first phone call". Nicole Griffin noted that Ed St. John only had about two years left and Chairman McAuliffe worried that there was no succession plan. He said Ed could "bring in the team." When opportunities arose. McAuliffe said outreach, via marketing and email was important, but fulfillment, in other words following up on marketing responses, was where the current voluntary EDC was lacking.

Mr. Godin also noted that Connecticut is an older state that doesn't promote modern development realities. Also discussed was the time needed to go through the land use commissions, which Mr. Godin said was typically long for all towns. He said there is nothing fast about commercial real estate.

Discussing the appearance of Middlebury Center and a proposed "streetscape", Mr. Godin said it was not unusual for small Connecticut towns to have a "hodge podge" of real estate. He said Ventura California offered tax incentives to improve the facades of businesses and rearrange parking, ultimately benefiting all nearby businesses. He complimented the Greenway as something other towns wanted to have, as well as the MRA.

OLD BUSINESS

Reports. Frank Mirovsky noted that the Woodbury Town Clerk warned homeowners if inquiries were made on titles to their home. This was done to warn of title theft, a growing concern.

Volunteerism. Chairman McAuliffe noted recent success in improving volunteerism by outreaching more to unaffiliated voters for board appointments. He said this was important to the "small town charm" associated with volunteerism. He discussed proposals made to the BOS after consulting with the First Selectmen of Southbury and Woodbury.

Nicole Griffin commented that most people in Middlebury had no idea that the boards existed and how appointments were made. She suggested using Social Media, such as the Middlebury Neighborhood page which has hundreds of followers. Jesse Langer also suggested the Region 15 and PTO pages as well. Nicole and Jesse agreed to follow up as a subgroup.

Video Project. Chairman McAuliffe said he planned to get the video done before end of 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Nicole Griffin MOTIONED to adjourn, SECOND by Frank Mirovsky and unanimously voted at about 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrence McAuliffe
Chairman—Economic Development Commission
cc. Town Clerk, Commission Members, Brian Godin