



Town of Griswold



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**GRISWOLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

GRISWOLD TOWN HALL

I. REGULAR MEETING (7:00 P.M.)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Thomas Giard, Jr. called this regular meeting of the Griswold Economic Development Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Thomas Giard, Jr., Vice Chairman Melvin Jetmore Paul Lach, Chris Hargus, Town Planner Carl Fontneau, and Recording Secretary Donna Szall.

3. Determination of Quorum

T. Giard stated that there is a quorum for this regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission.

4. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of the minutes of August 20, 2008

T. Giard stated that he did not receive the minutes and asked for a motion to table. M. Jetmore made a motion to table the minutes until the next regular meeting. P. Lach seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried. D. Szall apologized for the oversight.

5. Workshop

A. Garnet Consulting Services status report.

T. Giard stated that Garnet Consulting Services is here to give their status report. Mark Waterhouse and Leslie Cosgrove were present to their status report. L. Cosgrove stated that we can go over the survey questions and then we can review the status report. M. Waterhouse asked for the Commission's input.

Item 1: What are the strengths of the Town of Griswold as a business location and why would a business want to locate here. M. Jetmore stated, nice place to live and raise a family, good schools, convenient to shopping. M. Waterhouse stated that those were quality life issues but what would businesses require. M. Jetmore stated that businesses are concerned with employees.

T. Giard stated there is access to I-395 at two exits, commercially-zoned property, a new sewer treatment plant with capacity to allow for expansion, taxes are manageable, adequate fire

protection, road maintenance department is up to the task. M. Jetmore stated that there are two railroad spurs for Providence and Worcester Railroad.

P. Lach stated that tourists from other states drive through here to the casinos on Routes 164, 165, 201 and I-395. C. Hargus stated that there is public water that runs far out from town. T. Giard stated that there is a municipal electric company that provides discount service to the Borough. There was discussion of the lack of energy conservation rebates provided including that they are now giving rebates for the compact fluorescent bulbs.

M. Jetmore stated that there are two state parks at Pachaug Pond, 26,000 acres and Hopeville Pond that bring campers to the town for swimming and horse riding clubs. C. Fontneau stated that 28% of Griswold is protected open space.

P. Lach stated that we have police fire and ambulance services in the town.

Item 2: What are the weaknesses or issues that are impacting our economic development prospects? M. Jetmore stated that one weakness is a poor attitude by the residents. They are not open to new ideas and you have to prove it to them that you can.

T. Giard stated that there is no natural gas available. People see Griswold as a transient location and not a destination and don't have a signature that you are somebody. There was discussion of this matter such as a brand name.

M. Jetmore stated that there are seven dams that once provided electricity and two dams are being used to produce electricity. T. Giard stated that the lakes have become heavily residential and the water cannot be drawn down to produce electricity. M. Jetmore stated that this is a waterfront community without a town beach.

M. Jetmore stated that there is no development coordinator/grant writer. There was discussion of this matter.

C. Hargus stated that there was a design issue for downtown parking that lacks immediate access to store fronts during peak times. C. Fontneau stated that the buy-in/tie-in fees to sewer and water are too high.

M. Jetmore stated that downtown Jewett City is an ugly downtown. T. Giard stated that there are very few empty store fronts. C. Fontneau stated that the American Legion is being renovated along with two other derelict buildings which will have a positive impact as you enter the Borough. There was discussion of this matter including the need for a façade funding program.

Item 3: Are the surrounding communities or other nearby communities perceived as being more competitive and why? T. Giard stated that Plainfield has been active with a small business park that received state funding that is no longer available, extensive infrastructure and they promote their town and have natural gas.

M. Jetmore stated that the EDC proposed two business parks that were rejected by PZC. P. Lach stated that there is a lack of synergy between the boards and commissions. There was discussion of this matter.

L. Cosgrove asked what type of image you would like to see. T. Giard stated that Griswold was always a good place to live. P. Lach stated that there is a new hotel and conference center that will be coming to Griswold so there will be two hotels for businesses.

Item 5: What makes the Town of Griswold different from other communities, i.e., what is its unique selling proposition? M. Jetmore stated that the farming community appearance has been maintained. C. Fontneau stated that there is a division between the borough and the town. T. Giard stated that the town needs a hook. There was discussion of this matter.

Item 6: What types of information would you like to see on Griswold's website? T. Giard stated that there should be GIS maps of the enterprise zone, zoning maps. There was discussion of this matter.

Item 7: Have you seen other economic development brochures that you like? If so, whose? M. Jetmore stated that Voluntown has a good brochure. There was discussion of this matter. T. Giard stated that the larger industrial tracts of land be available on a list. P. Lach stated that tax incentives should be listed as well as the enterprise corridor. There was discussion of this matter.

T. Giard asked if there was anything else. M. Waterhouse stated that we can come back and answer any questions regarding the status report. L. Cosgrove explained the ranking of site selections used by businesses to locate to a town. There was discussion of this matter.

T. Giard thanked M. Waterhouse and L. Cosgrove for their presentation.

B. EDC comments on Draft MDP

T. Giard asked C. Fontneau to review the MDP draft. C. Fontneau stated that he has sent his comments to Nancy Hanrahan listing information gathering for the draft, the comments will be implemented and packaged for the CEDC in Hartford, reimbursable expenses and undefined work with loose ends, employees for new uses and affordable housing as missing. He stated that he will send the Commission's comments to her when they are ready. He stated that the report is a compilation of the independent consultants' reports.

M. Jetmore stated that the draft described Jewett City as having exclusive rights and that seems that the businesses are in direct conflict. M. Jetmore addressed the AOC regarding Triangle such as Brownfield clean up. C. Fontneau stated the property owner determines the fate of the property. P. Lach stated that there was no consistency and it was not written by the same person and that there should be consistency in referring to Town of Griswold and Borough of Jewett City. T. Giard stated that C. Fontneau will relay the problems of the draft to TPA. There was discussion of this matter including that the post office was omitted.

C. Discussion of SECTER site tour on September 24, 25, and 26.

T. Giard asked C. Fontneau about SECTER. C. Fontneau stated that the regional SECTER is having a bus tour of business sites and they asked him to contribute a site to the tour. C. Fontneau stated that they will tour the Neri site at exit 86 as well as the Stott property. There was discussion of this matter.

D. Other items of interest.

T. Giard asked for other items of interest. P. Lach asked about the business men's dinner. T. Giard stated that it would be on 10/14/08 at 7 p.m. and Burt Sacco of TPA will be the speaker at 8 p.m. There was discussion of this matter.

Allan Walpert, Triangle Wire representative would like to see the MDP assessment. C. Fontneau stated that he can come to the office to review the MDP copy.

Mark Bossey, a new resident suggested that Griswold have some sort of welcome package that would help market the town such as he received when he moved to Clinton. There was discussion of this matter.

C. Fontneau explained the workshop that will deal with the role of business retention and expansion in a town. He read the brochure for the record. There was discussion of this matter.

6. Adjournment

T. Giard asked for a motion to adjourn. M. Jetmore made a motion to adjourn. C. Hargus seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Szall
Recording Secretary