

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING OF JUNE 10, 2014**

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Members present: Randy Vidal, John Dobos, Christopher Pia, James Benson, Mary Dean, Mike Vickerelli, Fred Hyatt,

Others present: Karen Kaiser and Amy Knorr (Economic Development), Mayor John A. Harkins, Robyn Greenspan (Alt.), Councilman Jason Santi, and Dennis J. O'Connor and Erik Robie (UIL Holdings Corp.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Dobos called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. in Room 213 of the Town Hall, 2725 Main Street, Stratford, CT.

The agenda proceeded in the following order:

3. UI/SCG PRESENTATION - Mr. O'Connor and Mr. Robie spoke about energy savings and efficiency through the use of electricity and natural gas. Stratford is already a green energy community. Last year Stratford residents and businesses got over \$800,000 in gas and electric incentives which is approximately \$8 million in savings over a lifetime. The price of natural gas has come down and is now cheaper than heating by oil. In addition to heating, natural gas can be used for hot water, cooking and manufacturing. Governor Malloy is supporting a comprehensive energy strategy focusing on innovative approaches to energy efficiency and the expanded use of low cost natural gas. UIL hopes to convert 300,000 customers to natural gas over the next ten years. The Small Business Energy Advantage Program offers small businesses a no-cost energy assessment of their facility, energy management strategies and financial assistance to convert to more efficient sources of energy. Financial incentives are also offered to commercial, industrial and municipal customers. Even something as simple as switching lighting can bring down energy costs.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF May 13, 2014

- MS. GREENSPAN MOVED, SECONDED BY MS. DEAN, TO APPROVE THE FOREGOING MINUTES. MOTION TO APPROVE CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. UPDATE FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

a) Developer Point Stratford Renewal (PSR) – The legislation to create a special tax district to enhance the proposed redevelopment of the Stratford Army Engine Plant has been signed by the Governor.

b) Sikorsky Aircraft - The U.S. Navy has awarded the \$1.24 billion Presidential Helicopter contract to Sikorsky Aircraft.

c) Forest City's 128-unit apartment complex is 70% leased.

d) Hawley Lane Property - The Town of Stratford is in the process of foreclosing on a vacant property behind 99 Hawley Lane. A developer is showing serious interest in the property. This is a 9 acre property and the back taxes are more than \$460,000.

e) Dock Shopping Center - PETCO has re-signed its lease, AT & T is opening next to Citibank and CT Urgent Care will be opening in the old Blockbuster space next to Stop and Shop. The Boardwalk Marina Company located behind Lumi is taking a retail spot next to Westmarine. Zoning has approved the placement of a full-size boat on top of the I-95 billboard to market the marina.

f) Innoteq on Long Beach Blvd is looking to expand here in Stratford.

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g) US Chrome on Honeyspot Road is looking to expand and bring operations here from outside of Stratford.

h) Two Roads Brewery has applied to the CT DECD for a loan for new fermenting tanks. Two Roads Brewery now employs more than 30 people.

i) Straton Industries has received a loan from the CT DECD for high end fishing equipment.

j) York Laboratories is approved to receive a \$300K loan from the CT DECD to upgrade the building on Research Drive, (parking lot/roof and outside structure)

k) Two new nail salons - One in Paradise Green and one in the Merchants Walk Plaza.

l) Stratford has received a \$200,000 Brownfields grant for removal and clean-up at the Mercer Fuel towers site on Stratford Avenue.

m) DEEP Commissioner Klee and new DECD Director of TOD/Brownfield/Waterfront, Tim Sullivan, will be coming to the Army Engine Plant for a tour.

n) 540 Longbrook Avenue - DEEP Commissioner Klee will be meeting with Stratford officials about grant opportunities (\$4m) for the Contract Plating property.

o) 576/600 East Broadway - This superfund site is going to strict foreclosure on July 15, 2014. The back taxes owed are \$217,187.81. The economic development office has an interested developer.

p) 2370 Stratford Avenue - Wade's Garage is going to foreclosure sale in December 2014. (Sale date was June 7, but the Judge extended the date.) The back taxes owed to the town are in excess of \$45,000.

q) 993 Honeyspot Road - Stratford Redevelopment Agency (SRA) has recommended a lease with an offer to buy on the brownfield property at 993 Honeyspot Road and this was recently approved by the Town Council. The Town Attorney's Office is drawing up the lease agreement.

r) John Tarka has started his art project. The Commission does not need Council approval because it is using funds already in its budget.

s) UPS is expanding 20,000-50,000 feet.

t) Urban Land Institute – Ms. Kaiser and Mayor Harkins will be on the panel next week and speaking at the Fairfield County Commercial Brokers' Luncheon.

u) The Mayor's Golf Tournament had its best year and raised the most money.

3. NEW BUSINESS –none

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4. OLD BUSINESS

- Mr. Vidal questioned how many hits the Economic Development website is getting. (Dave Wright would have this information.)

5. ADJOURNMENT

- Chairman Dobos stated that the EDC will meet in July, but not in August.

- There being no further business before the Commission, on motion the meeting adjourned at 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail J. Nobili
Secretary