

**Town of Hebron**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
June 21, 2010  
Regular Meeting  
Horton House Conference Room  
Hebron Town Offices, 15 Gilead Street, Hebron

RECEIVED

JUN 29 A 9:36

Ann E. Duchesne  
HEBRON TOWN CLERK

**Members Present:** Vickie Avelis, Lawrence Preston, Dottie Moon, Jon Lesisko (7:10)

**Members Absent:** Peter Casarella

**Alternates Absent:** Bruce Raymond

**Staff Present:** Bonnie Therrien – Town Manager  
Michael O’Leary – Town Planner

Chairman, V. Avelis called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** D. Moon motioned to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2010 meeting without any changes.

J. Lesisko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

**Discussion of Economic Development Incentive Program**

M. O’Leary distributed a draft copy of the Incentive Program recently revised to include changes discussed at the April 19, 2010 meeting. V. Avelis led a discussion summarizing the changes and inquired about whether the category Mixed Use Facilities was clear. M. O’Leary noted that the term is a common reference. V. Avelis distributed a draft of the application form, noting that the format was updated but not the text. While reviewing the application, several changes were discussed, including the following:

V. Avelis inquired if the state statute should be referred to. M. O’Leary expressed his opinion that it should, but that the title of the application should be changed to reflect the correct statute description, as the statute section is 12-65b and not 12-656.

V. Avelis suggested adding a line for applicants to provide their email address.

V. Avelis inquired if companies still used the title of Treasurer. J. Lesisko responded that Connecticut corporations were required to have a President and a Secretary, and suggested using vague language to apply to a broader spectrum.

V. Avelis suggested collecting website information. D. Moon suggested making the information optional, leading to a discussion of somehow indicating what information was required and what was optional.

M. O’Leary inquired if the requested unit of measure for “Types of Jobs” should be specified to note the number of number or the percentage of jobs in each subcategory. D. Moon suggested requesting the number of jobs and the board agreed. M. O’Leary suggested entitling the section “Number of Jobs” for clarification sake.

D. Moon suggested not using all capitals when summarizing application instructions.

V. Avelis noted that duplicate copies of the application are not needed.

D. Moon inquired if the town offices were moving towards requesting correspondence via email. B. Therrien responded that though there has not been an official shift, she prefers email communication.

B. Therrien inquired if anyone had ever taken advantage of the program. M. O’Leary stated that there was one applicant but it did not advance.

V. Avelis noted that the contact information should be updated to reflect Bonnie Therrien as the Town Manager. B. Therrien stated that M. O’Leary should be reflected as the initial point of contact and that she would prefer to be listed second.

V. Avelis offered to make the changes discussed and outlined above, and email an updated draft to M. O’Leary. V. Avelis inquired if the program would need to be codified by the Board of Selectmen. M. O’Leary stated that the program would not be established as an ordinance, but a presentation to the Board of Selectmen is necessary as it would eventually be adopted as a policy.

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D. Moon motioned to accept the changes to the program as discussed. L. Preston seconded the motion and the motion opened for discussion.

J. Lesisko inquired if it were feasible to simplify the applicant section by just requesting the applicant's title, phone number and email address. J. Lesisko also suggested creating a place to reflect the date of the application. Board members endorsed the idea of creating a place for the date, but felt that it was important to reflect as much information as possible on the application so it could be used as a coversheet for the packet.

D. Moon noted that an electronic signature is commonly accepted and suggested adding that as well.

V. Avelis inquired if it was necessary to know who the treasurer was for applicants. B. Therrien noted that it would be useful if one wanted to check a company's viability.

V. Avelis inquired if the BOS needed to approve the form. B. Therrien expressed her opinion that BOS approval of the form was not necessary.

V. Avelis called the motion on the table. Board members voted and the motion was approved with all members in favor.

**Discussion of the Survey of Hebron Businesses:**

D. Moon led a discussion of survey options, noting that responses are collected and aggregated better with paid subscriptions. D. Moon suggested, at a subscription rate of \$19 per month, doing a survey for two months. D. Moon went on to state that with a subscription, one can run as many surveys as one would like with varying numbers of responses.

V. Avelis expressed her preference for different surveys targeting a variety of age groups, noting that on online survey enabled users to click on an age bracket and be led to a survey targeted for that particular demographic.

Discussions ensued about how to get the survey out. Suggestions were made regarding posting the survey on social networking sites, such as Facebook, and issuing invitations by link. Previously, a survey was sent in the mail with one per household. Concerns were expressed with the potential for dishonest responses or attempts to fill out the survey more than once. V. Avelis stated that the survey site would log the IP address of respondents, thus preventing multiple attempts. V. Avelis suggested publicizing the survey in the Rivereast, soliciting contact information that could be used to send the survey link out. B. Therrien noted that prior attempts to solicit information via surveys in Wethersfield yielded a poor response, and volunteered to contact the school superintendents for input. V. Avelis suggested holding a business meeting and introducing the survey there so word of mouth could be utilized to make the public aware. M. O'leary noted that the last survey yielded a response of roughly 1/3 participants responding.

V. Avelis polled board members present for their opinion on what the survey should yield so potential questions could be considered. L. Preston expressed his opinion that the survey should yield what townspeople's priorities are; likes and dislikes about the town; and specifically "what type of business would you like to see in town?", citing such information would be useful for the BOS as well. L. Preston noted that the CY 2000 survey was too involved.

J. Lesisko suggested bifurcating the survey to capture suggestions from businesses and consumers in an effort to see what businesses wants and needs are versus what consumers would like.

D. Moon expressed an interest in knowing what business owners think may be preventing them from growing, and what would help to bring in new businesses (i.e. whether appropriate infrastructure was in place and if townspeople would support what would be needed).

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V. Avelis stated that it made sense to focus on businesses considering the Village Green initiative. D. Moon noted that it was important to develop synergies to see what new businesses will work with existing ones.

B. Therrien noted that business visitations were also very informative. M. O'Leary stated that a visitation program was beneficial in the past and though Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce has been useful for some businesses, some push their business towards Glastonbury. M. O'Leary went on to state that the "Welcome Wagon" is lacking, and that it would be helpful. B. Therrien suggested contacting the Metro Hartford Alliance for assistance in putting together a packet for new businesses, noting that the Alliance also provides training. A discussion took place on how to determine the order of business visitations. Suggestions were made to visit the top twenty businesses in town, or to begin with the newest businesses and work backwards. V. Avelis noted that if the Metro Hartford Alliance helped with a new business questionnaire, it would also help in developing the survey. D. Moon agreed that the survey was important, and noted that paper responses make the data harder to organize. L. Preston stated that the last survey had space for comment, noting that comments are useful, entertaining and often offer a good perspective.

D. Moon noted that a visitation program is long term, possibly up to a year, whereas a survey is a quick way to gather information that could be used to discuss during visitation. D. Moon went on to suggest that a survey and visitation lets businesses know that there is momentum.

V. Avelis stated that the board needs to decide on survey questions and suggested that two or three members meet with D. Moon to assemble a draft for board review.

B. Therrien stated that after having met with the Metro Hartford Alliance and the Horton brothers, signs indicate that financing appears to be improving for mixed use developments. B. Therrien went on to note that Farmington and Rocky Hill each have mixed-use plans in the works. B. Therrien noted that Metro Hartford has a list of developers and suggested a van tour be organized for September so the town will be fresh in developer's minds for the trade shows that typically take place from October to December. J. Lesisko inquired if the survey focus should be changed to consumer perspective in lieu of business perspective considering the potential tour, to which B. Therrien suggested maintaining focus on businesses as consumer perspectives can be unrealistic. D. Moon noted that it was possible to obtain that information quickly without a formal survey. V. Avelis stated that if EDC was going to sponsor a van tour, focus needed to be given immediately considering the limited number of meetings. B. Therrien suggesting generating a theme around the use of Horton Boulevard to minimize the stigma of the term "Road to nowhere".

L. Preston inquired about the status of the possible fitness center project. B. Therrien and M. O'Leary stated that there weren't any new developments, and that Metro Hartford indicated that financing was not readily available for fitness centers. M. O'Leary further stated that developers have recently expressed interest in the Focci property, indicating there was activity.

A brief discussion took place during which M. O'Leary noted there was some money in the budget to fund some kind of tour. V. Avelis expressed her opinion that a tour might create a buzz and give residents a sense of attention. V. Avelis went on to state that if the Hortons were looking for a developer to take over the project, a van tour could be useful. Further discussion transpired over what properties could be toured, and how it would be organized. With a quick poll of the board, three members were in favor and one not sure, V. Avelis stated that at this time it's assumed that EDC will sponsor a tour. It was agreed that J. Lesisko and D. Moon (schedule permitting) would meet with Metro Hartford to discuss the tour. V. Avelis suggested that a quick survey could aid in developing the tour while a second survey could take place after. D. Moon agreed that it was important to incorporate a plan and marketing strategy with immediate action. B. Therrien and M. O'Leary agreed to plan the developer's tour.

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#### **Discuss other Old Buisness:**

M. O'Leary discussed the façade program, informing the board that Gina Maries was moving along nicely and that there were roughly six weeks left until completion. M. O'Leary went on to indicate that there hasn't been a firm commitment by the chiropractor and that a deadline may be required. V. Avelis agreed that a deadline might be needed and that consideration be given to reallocate the funds to another participant.

M. O'Leary stated that the new traffic lights and crosswalks were done and that the contractor for the sidewalks was selected. The town is awaiting bonds before the work can proceed.

M. O'Leary informed the board that the traffic light for Horton Boulevard is being designed with the intent of having it installed in the fall, and that the design for sidewalks on the north side of Main Street was almost complete as well. V. Avelis inquired why there wasn't a turn-only lane established for Wall Street, to which M. O'Leary noted that thought it wasn't painted in this time it remains on the Village Green plan.

#### **New Business**

##### **Discussion of Planning for Future Charrette:**

B. Therrien stated that the BOS was focusing on core services and would concentrate on Charrette in the fall, noting that if a webcam could be utilized the Simsbury planner could be very useful for the process. B. Therrien went on to state that both Hamden and Simsbury have participated and are each good resources, but there needs to be focus on one specific area (assumedly Main Street). D. Moon noted that the anticipated fall time table fits with the EDC schedule. B. Therrien offered to develop a list of dates the Simsbury planner is available. B. Therrien also noted that having a vision in place is a key step, as ordinances can then be structured around it to make the process easier. V. Avelis suggested inviting the Simsbury planner to the July EDC meeting, noting the process can take six to eight months. B. Therrien also noted that the Charrette process helps developers figure out if their vision fits into the plan.

##### **Discussion of Hebron Bulletin Articles:**

V. Avelis stated that the reporter for the Hebron Bulletin is requesting articles and topics every two weeks and that lack of events leaves little to discuss. V. Avelis noted that the developer's tour would be a good topic for August or September, but a topic was needed for July. Members present discussed a variety of potential topics including: "What is EDC and why is it needed?" and showcasing a local business. V. Avelis suggested that business showcases can dovetail with business visitations and serve as a follow up to the façade program. V. Avelis further suggested feeding the reporter a list of questions and outline requirements to direct his efforts. It was further suggested that during the "Intro to EDC" article, attention could be brought to the need to fill a vacant alternate seat. M. O'Leary and J. Lesisko offered to write an article about the EDC for board review before submitting it for publication. V. Avelis requested the draft by July 1, 2010 as Rivereast deadlines make it necessary to post by Fridays.

##### **BOS Workshop with EDC:**

B. Therrien suggested that workshops with the BOS be postponed until after the review of core services is complete.

##### **Other New Business:**

M. O'Leary discussed Vermont's Heart & Soul Photo Contest and suggested using the concept to solicit photographs from townspeople that demonstrate what they feel is the heart and soul of the community, noting that it could also help evolve Charrette. B. Therrien stated that the concept fit nicely with the BOS theme for "Pride in Hebron" and suggested that boards could sponsor a Hebron contest.

V. Avelis inquired if there would be a Hebron Day at the park, noting that if so then J. Watts suggested EDC have a table present. B. Therrien offered to confirm with Parks and Recreation what was being considered, noting that August was being considered as a possible time. V. Avelis suggested October for a craft fair, a bike rodeo or a square dance.

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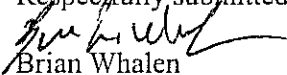
**Adjourn**

L. Preston motioned to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting will take place on Monday July 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Horton House.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian Whalen  
Board Clerk