

**Town of Stonington**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**February 18, 2015**  
**Human Services Building- 7:00pm**

**Present:** Blunt White, Richard Balestracci, Joel Valenti, Suzanne Lane, Amy Arruda and David Hammond

**Absent:** Edward Planeta Jr.

**Town Guests:** Tim Murray and Danielle Chesebrough

**Call to order:** 7:06; **Adjourn:** 9:20

Approval of January 21, 2015 Minutes

Motion: Blunt White

Second: Richard Balestracci

All in favor

**Business:**

**Review Final Version PODC report (February 6, 2015)** – PZC will likely hold a hearing for POCD public comments/adoption on April 14. EDC discussed issues it has with specific portions of the POCD (see Addendum) and the opportunity to present those issues to the Board of Selectmen as part of the POCD approval process.

Blunt White will prepare and address a letter to the Selectmen with specific recommendations to improve the POCD with a request that they take an active role in the approval process.

Motion: Blunt White

Second: Dave Hammond

All in favor

**Budget Report:** By the end of FY 6/2015 consider use of funds for restarting the M-1 initiative with some continued work by Planimetrics.

**EDC Website and Facebook Page:** Amy suggested looking at linking with town's website. Need to look more into this possibility, find out who manages this. Amy will follow-up. Joel is working on the EDC Facebook page, as EDC updates can go through Facebook as well.

**Elected Official-Business Outreach:** Rob Simmons is hosting three breakfasts (two have taken place). Positive reactions from participants. Blunt White helped put these breakfasts together.

**New Members:** Tim and Danielle Chesebrough attended the meeting as prospective new members.

Adjourn

Motion: Blunt White

Second: Dave Hammond

All in favor

Addendum

Discussion Points to be included in letter to Selectmen:

8.2.5 Consider establishing village districts.

Be sure board is aware of what Sec 8-2j includes (i.e. homes in these districts boundaries, per Sec. 8-2j, would subject zoning or architectural review board to review color, materials, etc.). While we want to protect and preserve, what is the cost-benefit. Ask authors why should the town do this? Are there instead incentives to provide to preserve character of homes?

8.2.6 Review the NDD and IHRD zoning requirements for potential updates.

Return to earlier version, which said 'consider greater use of these type of tools'. Consider, why they removed the term 'encourage greater use'. This seems to capture the spirit of the 'item' better. Don't want to see these reduced or removed. Note: Outside parties review this to get a sense of the environment in our town, this doesn't seem as promising to new possible investors/developers. Add EDC as Partner to this item, please.

5.3.4 Develop and adopt Buildable Land Regulations to reduce development pressure on sensitive areas.

Change to 'Consider. (Note: Also might want to ask them to define what 'Buildable Land' includes. Remove adopt or add a modifier, such as 'with intent to adopt'.)

Need to define items; buildable land definition; lot area, need to consider these definitions carefully.

6.1.7 Consider increasing the open space set-aside requirement in the subdivision regulations.

Bring to attention that this is high and possibility other towns are lower? TBD.

To do: Look up Zoning Regulation of other towns to see what their percentage of open space land is Subdivision "Set-Asides"

6.1.1 Strive to achieve the goal of preserving 21% of the Town's land as committed open space.

Is this needed? Is open space a real issue, 44% different types of open land, including agricultural, open space, vacant, etc. How does this help with budget funding issues. Think from a developer's point of view.

6.1.13 Establish a Municipal Land Acquisition and Development Authority under CT General Statutes Section 7-131p.

Change from 'Establish' to 'Consider'; ask for cost-benefit analysis.

General:

Move survey information to an appendix.

Section 4 and reference in 10.4 the report relay's heavy on the concept that agriculture can bring new economic development. They cite 'Agricultural activities are identified in the 2011 Southeastern CT Enterprise Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as one of the industry groups that contributes to the economic base of the region'. Have they proven that agriculture really could be a growing part of our economic community development? How much could come from this area (i.e. tax base?). Section 4 ok, but 10.4 shouldn't make readers think that economic base will come from agriculture. Industrial/Commercial is so low compared to other areas.

Look at residential growth areas, is this land pulled from other areas as well (double dipping) and also if population is stagnant or decreasing, do we need all of this (understand changing demographics).

One purpose is to establish a common vision for the community's future supported by recommended land uses. It provides policy and strategy recommendations to provide a framework for consistent decision-making. It serves as a guide for elected officials, boards and commissions, town employees and residents in conducting town business with consideration of achieving desired future outcomes.' We should include and need to identify that developers and potential and current business owners'. Missed opportunity as a marketing tool for achieving these goals.

Ideas:

Have a developer or (current/prospective) business owners look at the report, and bring comments to meeting.

Look at other cities EDC plans, Zoning and other regulation). I.E. 10 best small towns in America; Portland, Ashville, etc. What do they have in common? How to get there.

Minutes and addendum recorded by

Danielle Chesebrough

Approved 3/18/2015

Blair White  
Chair