



Town of Cromwell Economic Development

***REGULAR MEETING
6:30 PM WEDNESDAY MARCH 20, 2024
ROOM 222 CROMWELL TOWN HALL 41 WEST STREET***

Minutes and Record of Votes

Present: Chairman Richard Nobile, Vice Chairman Jay Polke, Paul Warendia,
Robert Donohue, Diane Wiegert, Marilyn Teitelbaum-Dworkin (arrived 7:03pm)

Also Present: Director of Planning and Development Stuart Popper, Mayor James Demetriades, Town
Council member Al Waters

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Chairman Nobile.

2. Roll Call/Seating of Alternates

The presence of the above members was noted.

3. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Robert Donohue and seconded by Paul Warendia to approve the agenda with the amendment of adding a presentation from Titan Properties for a Tax Abatement extension and a presentation by Mayor Demetriades. All were in favor; the motion passed.

4. Public Comments

5. Director of Planning and Development Report

Mr. Popper reviewed his memo dated March 20, 2024. He said there will be a public hearing for the high school athletic facilities at the Planning and Zoning meeting on April 4, 2024. He said that OL Infusion is opening at 75 Berlin Road. Mr. Popper said the space next to Burlington Coat Factory is being leased to Cortiva for a hair and nail training facility. He said it is a 5,000 square foot space.

Mr. Popper said he updated the town website with new and closed businesses as well as all available parcels for lease or sale.

Mr. Waters said that Bill Coons told him that Middlesex Hospital was dragging their feet about building the new office building. Mr. Popper said the rumors are that the bids were all priced too high. Mr. Polke said he was with Vin Capece, CEO of Middlesex Hospital at a chamber meeting and he said their intent is to go forward with the building. Chairman Nobile said the land has been cleared since last fall.

6. New Business:

Mr. Popper said that the Marriott hotel is here looking to extend their tax abatement. He said the State extended the maximum time to 10 years from 7 years. He said the EDC needs to make a recommendation to the Town Council on any proposed tax abatement.

Ajesh Patel from Ava Realty Cromwell said they are asking to extend the tax abatement to 10 years. He said that COVID hit right as the hotel was opening and they were forced to close the operations for a substantial amount of time and then the next 2 years were ramp up years. He said that 2023 was the first true year of operations and the property is progressing well. Mr. Popper clarified that this would be only on the building not the personal property in the building or the land. Mr. Patel said yes, that is correct. Mr. Popper also confirmed that County Line Drive and 100 Berlin Road both received 10-year abatements. Mr. Patel said they are proposing the same abatement through year 7 and then 25% for years 8-10.

Chairman Nobile said he stayed there for a few days and the hotel was nice and he thought the hotel is a job well done. Mr. Polke said he has heard the same and the hotel is a compliment to the town. Mr. Warendas said he feels he can support this since the abatement would be keeping with other abatements.

A motion was made by Jay Polke and seconded by Robert Donohue to endorse the proposed tax abatement. All were in favor; the motion passed.

Mr. Popper said he will let the attorney know and they can pick a date to present this to the Town Council.

Mayor Demetriades thanked the Commissioners for the work they do and said he talked with Chairman Nobile back in January and presented him with some ideas and concepts for Economic Development. The Mayor distributed copies of his letter to Chairman Nobile dated January 31, 2024. He told the Commissioners that they are able to make their own decisions and he is just presenting some concepts and ideas on the best ways to bring culture and diversity to our town. He said I would love to partner with you to accomplish some of these ideas.

Mayor Demetriades reviewed point one, which details the legal background of the Commission. He said Point two should be updated since Mr. Popper already made updates to the website with

town businesses and their information. He thanked Mr. Popper for doing that. The Mayor reviewed point three about highlighting current businesses. He said perhaps there could be an event committee that could develop some type of activity to draw attention to businesses. He said that all of the storefronts on Main Street are full. Mr. Polke said the Riverport Festival might be the best idea. The Commissioners and Mayor discussed the possibility of a Riverport Festival Committee and who a possible committee would be apprised of. Chairman Nobile said it could be part of the EDC and volunteers. Mr. Polke said events could get expensive and Mayor Demetriades said that you can request 1/20th of the grand list so there is money to be used for Economic Development. He said he believed that equates to around \$35,000.

The Mayor asked if there was any interest in doing business of the month and Mr. Polke said maybe it could be business of the season. Chairman Nobile agreed and Mayor Demetriades said he could do a proclamation for the business as well. He also said that the Commission should decide how you want to select the business and what criteria's you want to look at.

Mr. Popper said you have to have volunteers for things like the Riverport Festival. There was a discussion on who could be part of the committee and it was discussed that the Cultural District and other community committees could each have a seat on the volunteer commission. The Mayor said it could be put under the recreation department. Chairman Nobile said we will discuss the idea of a Riverport Festival Committee and decide how to proceed.

Mayor Demetriades moved on to point five and said that they should think about getting a brochure printed that could be put in hotel lobbies. He said people do pick them up. Mr. Popper said we would need money for a brochure and the Mayor said that the high school students could design the brochure and we could get it printed. He also said the Commission could go to the Town Council to request money for this. Mr. Popper said someone would have to step up to be the one to work with the high school student. Chairman Nobile said we can discuss this at the next meeting.

Chairman Nobile asked about the post office and the Mayor said he heard a rumor that the Cromwell Post Office may be on the cutting board. He said they have been plagued with lots of problems. Chairman Nobile said we should have a nice post office in town. The Mayor said they could send a letter to Washington and he will sign it. Mr. Polke said the post office building is in disrepair.

Chairman Nobile thanked the Mayor for the informative session and said you are welcome here any time.

7. Chairman's Comments/Commissioners' Comments

8. Communications:

9. Approval of Minutes:

- a. February 21, 2024

A motion was made by Jay Polke and seconded by Paul Warendt to approve the minutes of February 21, 2024. All were in favor; Robert Donohue abstained. The motion passed.

10. Good & Welfare

Mr. Polke thanked the Mayor for coming.

11. Adjourn

A motion was made by Robert Donohue and seconded by Paul Warendt to adjourn at 7:43pm. All were in favor; the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Imme".

Linda Imme
Recording Clerk