

Town of Plymouth
80 Main Street
Terryville, CT 06786
www.plymouthct.us

Economic Development Commission
Telephone: (860) 585-4001
Fax: (860) 585-4015

Minutes

February 18, 2025

Call to Order: Economic Development Commission Vice-Chairman Jeff Scott called the February 18, 2025, Economic Development Commission Special Zoom meeting to order at 5:18 p.m., in the Mayor's Conference Room, Plymouth Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Economic Development Commissioner Bob Green, Economic Development Commissioner Jordan Kuczenski, and Economic Development Vice Chairman/Commissioner Jeff Scott. Also in attendance were Town Council Liaison Remie Ferreria, Director of Planning and Economic Development Margus Laan, and Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor.

Pledge of Allegiance

Economic Development Commission Vice-Chairman Jeff Scott led the Economic Development Commission and the Public Audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Fire Exit Notification

Economic Development Commission Vice-Chairman Jeff Scott noted the Fire Exit for the record.

Public Comment

No report.

Chairman's Report

No report.

Consultant's Report

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor provided his Consultant's Report as follows: There are two tenants who are seriously considering leasing portions of 400 South Main Street, noting one tenant was looking to do a renewable diesel fuel production facility and at the adjoining building there is a company looking to do metal fabrication, welding and steel erection and briefly elaborated.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the Armbruster property Buyer had stalled, and the property was back on the market, noting it is an 8-acre parcel on the corner of North Harwinton Avenue and Preston Road.

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Consultant's Report Cont'd.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the Lucky Cup restaurant has been leased to Steve's Top Dog, which has always been a Food Truck, noting this will be his first sit-down permanent location. He further stated he is waiting to hear back from the Owner for additional information.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Craig Bothroyd, Owner of the former Prospect Street School, is in negotiations with Ryan Geddes to convey the property to him. He further stated Ryan Geddes plans to redevelop the school and the adjacent soccer field to apartments.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Badd Motorcycle, 272 Main Street, is on the market for the asking price of \$1.2 million.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he had included a CoStar property listing for Commissioner review.

Close out of Phase III of the Business Park and Economic Development Fund

When questioned by Economic Development Commissioner Bob Green, Vance Taylor stated Lot 1 was under contract to Ryan Geddes. He further stated Ryan Geddes has signed paperwork to purchase it and is now in the process of getting a Site Plan ready to send to Margus Laan for the necessary approvals. Vance Taylor stated Ryan Geddes has an ecommerce business for a Packing and Distribution operation.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the Lot 3 sale is in the process for John Casanova's bottle warehouse, which is the companion building to his Bottling facility on Lot 2 which is already up.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Lot 9, Swicklas Court, has been sold to Hillary Coombs. He further stated it is currently under construction and expected to be completed in March 2025. Vance Taylor stated this building is 7,500 square feet, which will be divided into three bays of 2,000 square feet areas. Vance Taylor stated these three areas will house small tenants who will occupy the buildings.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Todd Schultz has purchased Lot 10 in mid-December, which will be SBK for woodworking, noting his building is currently under construction.

A brief discussion took place concerning soil conditions with Genovese on Bombard Court and Lot 10.

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Close out of Phase III of the Business Park and Economic Development Fund Cont'd.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Phillip Hock, P & J Playground Services, Lot 15 on Lassy Court, should be beginning construction this spring

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Brian Kopcha, Lot 16, has construction scheduled for the Spring, noting the building is on the site.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Ryan Geddes has Lot 20 and Lot 21 on Container Drive and has plans for a company that manufactures electrical hardware.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Lot 22, Container Drive, is the last lot in the Business Park and is available for sale. He further stated it is approximately 1.5 acres and can accommodate a 5,000 square foot building.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the interior lot has been sold to David Dillion, who owns a small manufacturing company which makes decorative barn beams and restores/fabricates vintage wood.

Economic Development Commissioner Bob Green stated David Dillon had already started clearing trees for construction.

When questioned by Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott, Vance Taylor stated the last lot (in front of Lot 23) has an asking price of \$58,000 and will be provided with incentive grants so the net price is \$43,000.

Economic Development Commissioner Jordan Kuczenski stated his father is heavily interested in this lot. He further stated his plan is to relocate a 10,000 square foot building on the property with a two-way entrance on each side. He further stated it will not be used for storage. Economic Development Commissioner Jordan Kuczenski stated he also plans on moving a 10,000 square foot rental onto the lot. He further stated they ran some cut and fills and calculated grades before sending it off to engineering; a brief discussion followed.

Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott requested Joel Kuczenski present his plans to the Economic Development Commissioners. Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott stated it is an incubator, and the Economic Development Commission wants them not storage places.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated 400 South Main Street, the renewable fuels facilities will be labor intensive and will create no less than 35 new jobs hired locally.

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Close out of Phase III of the Business Park and Economic Development Fund Cont'd.

When questioned by Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott regarding procurement of permits, Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the person that operates this facility has 40 other operations located throughout the country and is familiar with the regulatory approvals he will need to get.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Frank Coscina, FJC Parts Cleaning Company, was closing at the end of this month, noting that the company is being marketed for purchase or lease. He further stated he has received several offers.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated 60 Napco Drive, SunnyCor, Inc., has a new Owner and is leasing the building to AMC Metal Works, which is a welding and metal fabricating company.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he was a panelist at the Central CT Chamber Economic Outlook Breakfast in January.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he would like to see the Mayor and the Economic Development Commissioners begin visiting local Town Manufacturers again. He further stated this endeavor gives the Commission an idea of what we have to offer in Town, noting a little-known fact is that the red straw that comes out of a WD 40 can is actually manufactured in Terryville.

Director of Planning and Economic Development Margus Laan stated this also helps us understand what the enterprises are in Town, what they do and familiarizes us with the labor force.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated thanks to State Senator Henri Martin, the Economic Development Staff, and Economic Development Commission Chairman Seth Duke, the Town was able to receive Enterprise Zone designation.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the first round of Enterprise Zone Tax Abatements went to Accugrind/Dick Clukey, Infinity Resurfacing/Jordan Kuczenski and Nutmeg Spice. Economic and Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated next year John Casanova will be eligible for the Enterprise Zone Tax Abatement as well as the South Main Street companies that he previously discussed.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he is involved with the Town's CIF Ad Hoc Committee and noted interviews were taking place for the RFP for the Streetscape and Downtown Improvement Projects and briefly elaborated.

Close out of Phase III of the Business Park and Economic Development Fund Cont'd.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated the Town received a second grant for the Historic Resources Inventory from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and noted the RFP has gone out and is due back by March 3rd, noting this will be for a continuation of the previous work for a number of Town properties.

When questioned by Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott, Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated for a building to be considered to be historic, the building would have to be at least 50 years old and briefly elaborated.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated Town Councilman Joe Green had recommended the Historic Property Commission reach out to property owners who are identified as having historic homes/businesses and provide them with assistance for them to do restoration activity and improve the Town's historic inventory.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he will be working on updating and finishing the directory, along with the Town business company visits, this year.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he, the Mayor and Economic Development Commission Chairman Seth Duke had met with a company that was interested in constructing a 50,000 square foot manufacturing building and briefly elaborated.

Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott recommended Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor talk with Steve Worhunsky, noting he is available and local.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated as of January 2024, based on discussions he had with Economic Development Commission Chairman Seth Duke, Town Attorney Bill Hamzy and DECD Deputy Commissioner Matt Pugliese, an agreement was reached that any lot sales from January 2024 and forward would not be subject to the 50% commission to the State and the Town would keep the monies, which ended the relationship with the State in a friendly manner. He further stated the Mayor had indicated to him and Economic Development Commission Chairman Seth Duke that an Economic Development Fund had been set up and its use would be determined by the Economic Development Commission.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he was approached by Mac and Molly Pet Groomers, who will be moving into the former Absolute Clarity & Calibration, LLC (Microscope) building at 109 Main Street, Terryville, along with other companies. He further stated monies from the Economic Development Fund could benefit these smaller Town companies, a brief discussion followed.

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Close out of Phase III of the Business Park and Economic Development Fund Cont'd.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he had sent the Economic Development Commissioners a link to the City of Bristol's Business Incentive page, noting it is an easy to fill out online form and felt the Economic Development Commission should develop a similar page to help out existing and new Town Businesses with incentives, etc.

Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott stated he would rather see a lot of small amounts given out to a greater number of businesses, i.e., amounts of \$5,000, \$10,000 etc.; a brief discussion followed.

When questioned by Economic Development Commissioner Bob Green, Margus Laan stated the Village District begins at Allen Street.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor there should be a limit on the distribution of funds from the Economic and Development Fund, noting maybe it should be tied to the number of jobs being created and like Bristol, there has to be a commitment to the business unless it were to go out of business.

Economic and Development Director Margus Laan stated the Mayor had questioned expanding the Business Development space in Town.

Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Scott stated the Economic Development Commission's charge was that every business in Town, not just the Business Park, should be coming to the Economic Development Commission for advice and discussion.

Margus stated the Mayor asked how to expand the business space in Town, and the Economic Development Commission should be working on Business Policy.

Economic and Development Commissioner Bob Green stated he was in agreement.

Economic and Development Commissioner Jordan Kuczenski stated he saw a newsletter from 2002 whereby there was an Economic Development community forum at the Lyceum for Manufacturers and stated he thought it would be a good idea to hold another one with incentives, grant programs, etc., a lengthy discussion followed.

Economic Development Commissioner Jordan Kuczenski stated the Commission should be thinking about a Marketing Outreach Program and getting Plymouth's companies involved, as well, noting there has to be a gain for them.

Close out of Phase III of the Business Park and Economic Development Fund Cont'd.

Ribbon Cuttings

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated there are no Ribbon Cuttings scheduled at this time however there will be one for John Casanova when he's ready to open officially.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he wants to give a little press to other Town businesses that move into existing buildings.

Town Council Liaison Remie Ferreria stated the Town Council approved an Economic Development Fund to be set up in November 2024 but were told the amount in this fund would be approximately \$10,000 to \$20,000, not the \$200,000 figure the Economic Development Commission is talking about. He further stated he is in favor of this fund money going back to the General Fund, as it has in the past, and the \$200,000 is a concern for him. Town Council Remie Ferreira stated another concern he has is if the Town owes the State \$500,000, we are still on the hook and he doesn't care what the Mayor says about waiting until the State brings it up, noting if we owe it, then we should pay it.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor noted we could ask the State to forgive the owed amount.

Town Council Liaison Remie Ferreria stated we should not be giving money away to help moving costs, tax incentives, etc., until the money is paid back to the State or the Town gets a release on the monies owed.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he would relay this information to the Mayor.

Town Council Liaison Remie Ferreira stated he will be relaying it to the Mayor, as well.

Town Council Liaison Remie Ferreira stated the number of quasi groups with their own funding is concerning, citing the Police Extra Duty Fund, the Board of Education's Rainy Day Fund, and now the schools have roof issues that are going to be the Town's financial problem, as well as crumbling roads, a \$21 million dollar proposed Police Station, and every Town Department will be asking for at least a three percent increase. He further stated we need to get fiscally responsible. Town Council Liaison Remie Ferreira stated he wants to see an Impact Study Report on the Grand List showing what businesses in the Industrial Park have had an impact on the residents.

Economic Development Consultant Vance Taylor stated he can ask the Assessor for this report which will give us an idea of the revenue; a brief discussion followed.

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Adjournment

There being no further business of the Economic Development Commission, Economic Development Commissioner Bob Green made a motion, seconded by Economic Development Commissioner Jordan Kuczenski to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patricia A. Hale
Recording Secretary