

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a special meeting of the Bloomfield Town Council held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 via hybrid meeting format with Zoom Webinar virtual platform. The in-person location in Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

In-Person Attendance: Councilors Anthony C. Harrington, Chair, Kenneth L. McClary, Joseph Merritt, Sharron Howe, Acting Town Manager and India Rodgers, Clerk of Council, Justin LaFountain, Director of Building and Land Use, Jon Colman, Assistant Director of Building and Land Use

Absent was: Councilors C.F. Politis and Rickford Kirton

Guest were: Denise Robidoux and Mike Goman of Goman & York Consultants (virtual), Scott Connuck, East Point Energy

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Presentation from East Point Energy – Tobey Road Energy Center

Mr. Scott Connuck of East Point Energy presented the Tobey Road Energy Center project to the subcommittee members. This energy storage project development firm focused on the origination, construction, and operation of energy storage projects. They partner with utilities, landowners, and communities to deploy grid-scale projects that make the electrical grid more renewable, resilient, and affordable. Success is measured by delivering profitable energy storage solutions that benefit the grid, communities, and our environment.

Councilor McClary had several questions on the project relative to the following:

- How big is this project? Less than 10 acres, use extra space for wetlands buffer
- Disturbing any wildlife?
- Tree replacement?– currently agriculture (safety fence with barb wire, be mindful of the aesthetics to show DRB review of site plan
- Business model – sale market for electricity in New England, pay to charge battery and pay back on the grid
- Wholesale market payment, electricity go to neighboring community

Councilor Merritt noted that the solar power grid is important for global and green energy.

Mr. Justin LaFountain, Director of Building and Land Use reminded the committee members that this project must go directly to the Siting Council. The Mayor and Town Manager can submit comments with the Council and TPZ. It was encouraged to present the final product to Council and solicit public feedback as well.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Status Update on the Tax Abatement Policy

The Tax Abatement Policy was referred to the Economic Development Commission/Development Agency for further consideration and analysis. Focus on businesses the Town want to come to Bloomfield. The committee

is also review the comprised state listing and are interested in 5/6 industries, any additional benefits to the town economics. The committee will return with recommendations for consideration in June.

Discussion and Update on Community Investment Fund Applications

Councilor Harrington commented on the new categories for planning grants in the next round of Community Investment Fund. In addition, to the previous submitted applications, the Town will also apply for municipal developer plan for Town Center and other DECD Meeting.

The CIF Committee recommended to the town to submit at least the minimal ask of \$1.5 million for the Housing Rehabilitation and the Small Business Loan Program. In addition, they also suggest to increase grant amounts to make a greater effect on the businesses.

The first Council meeting in June for resolution to apply for Round 3. Councilor Merritt mentioned that the Town should do a better job at applying for more grants.

Discussion regarding Affordable Housing Plan

A draft of the Affordable Housing Plan is required by the state, drafted by Don Poland of Goman & York Consultants go to TPZ in June. This plan has been submitted to staff level for review.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Committee

Mr. LaFountain commented on the requirement to develop a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Advisory Committee with potential TIF applications. The TIF Advisory Committee is comprised of 7 members, 3 members must be land owners in each district. (Tobey Road, Blue Hills, Town Center).

STAFF REPORTS

Development Inquiries and Project Updates

Mr. LaFountain provided a detailed report of the current town initiatives in Building and Land Use.

- TPZ Meeting approved the Warehouse on West Dudley scheduled on April 27 to discuss the Warehouse on West Dudley Town Road. However, there is an interest of some to appeal this decision.
- Popeye's proposed project approved at 40 Tunxis Avenue
- The Green Machine Nursery approved for drive up
- Back East Brewery – addition of a commercial kitchen approved
- Thomas Hooker Brewery received official permanent approval of outdoor patio.
- The property located at 1335 Blue Hills Avenue submitted proposal for repurposing this site.
- The Republic applied for a zoning modification for their outdoor patio, four seasons porch

- There are some new potential investors scouting Bloomfield for a new restaurant possibly to increase amenities in the Downtown area.
- Wintonbury Mall – Applied for several permits for roofing and windows

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Mike Goman, Goman & York commented and explained the differences between Assessment of Market Demand v. Supply, relative to various types of business industries. He mentioned the current resurgence and success of restaurants since the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, he also noted that recreation uses are a tough sell to any investor to work in the Town Center.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 18, 2023.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of March 1, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor McClary and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.