



Town of Griswold

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**GRISWOLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 19, 2021
GRISWOLD TOWN HALL MAIN MEETING ROOM, 28 MAIN STREET, JEWETT CITY, CT**

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Tom Giard asked all present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag.

I. REGULAR MEETING (7:00 P.M.)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Giard called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Tom Giard, Vice Chairman James Barnie, Secretary Charlotte Geer, Paul Lach, Kenneth Bousquet, Town Planner Mario J. Tristany, Jr.

3. Determination of Quorum

Chairman Giard determined that a quorum of the Commission was seated.

4. Election of Officers

A. Chairman – Nominations for Chairman

- Chairman T. Giard asked for nominations for the Chairman
- Commissioner J. Barnie nominated Tom Giard
- Commissioner C. Geer seconded the motion
- The Commission voted unanimously to re-elect Tom Giard to the position of Chairman

B. Vice-Chairman – Nominations for Vice-Chairman

- Chairman T. Giard asked for nominations for the Vice-Chairman position
- Commissioner P. Lach nominated J. Barnie
- Chairman T. Giard seconded the motion
- The Commission unanimously voted re-elect J. Barnie to the position of Vice-Chairman

C. Secretary – Nominations for Secretary

- Chairman T. Giard asked for nominations for the Secretary
- Commissioner J. barnie nominated C. Geer
- Chairman T. Giard seconded the motion
- The Commission unanimously voted to re-elect C. Geer to the position of Secretary

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Valerie Puzos

5. Public Comment

- Chairman T. Giard asked if there were anyone present with Public Comments
- D. Bennet commented that both T. Giard and K. Bousquet appointments had expired in January. Not sure if you have been recommissioned at this point
- D. Bennet stated that she lost her train of thought for her other comment
- Jen Bingle asked if there were any 5G towners in our town
- D. Bennet again stated that she found her train of thought there is economic development there have not been meetings of the EDC since February and she commented that wondered how economic developed without zoom meetings for the last 17 months
- Pam asked if they would be able to ask questions after the presentation
- Chairman T. Giard responded yes

6. New Business

Presentations by Attorney William Sweeney, Partner TCORS, and James Rossman, Principal of Stadia Engineering Associates regarding a proposed Technology Park District Zoning Text Amendment Change and the Development of Data Centers in Griswold.

- Chairman T. Giard read item 6 into the record and stated that a presentation will be made by Attorney William Sweeney and James Rossman
- Attorney Sweeney introduced himself and James Rossman who has not arrived yet. W. Sweeney noted that Jim has the presentation boards for tonight's meeting
- Commissioner Barnie made a motion to table the Sweeny and Rossman presentation until after and move on to the project updates.
- The motion was seconded by Commissioner C. Geer and unanimously voted to proceed to Item #7 Project Updates
- Commissioner T. Giard referred to the first item and noted the following:

A. JR Flagg Route 164 – Project Update

Chairman Giard noted the following:

- JR Flagg is a RV dealer that has been looking for a site in Griswold to build and sell RV Bus type units, have two successful sites in Massachusetts
- Purchased a site in Griswold next to the right of Petro Max on Route 164
- The property has been cleared and there is construction equipment on site
- Bus type units
- They still plan on being there and noted that some of his family will be moving down to Griswold to run the facility

B. Heritage River Village Project – (Route 164) Project Update

Chairman Giard noted the following:

- Talks with Jeff and David on a weekly basis and noted that David is present here tonight
- Expecting a bridge load for the re-permitting of their revised HRV Development Plan
- Jeff and David put together a Housing plan for the subject 60 to 70 condo units
- Chairman Giard commented that that will be the responsibility of the Planning and Zoning Commission

C. Titan, LLC – 110 Unit Assisted Living, 134 Preston Road (Route 164) – Project Update

- Town Planner Mario Tristany noted that he has contacted Brian Byrnes, Project Developer on several occasions by email and by phone to get a project update and construction start but unfortunately Mr. Byrnes has not replied to calls or emails
- M. Tristany further noted that he had heard that the Federal Court is trying to contact him as well because this was part of a bankruptcy settlement

D. Infrastructure – Project Update – Bonding for Water and Sewer Extensions Routes 164 and 201

- Chairman Giard asked Town Planner M. Tristany to comment on this item
- M. Tristany noted that First Selectman Todd Babbitt and me and our consultant Fuss & O’Neil have been working with the USDA on a grant and loan program for Routes 164 and 201 water and sewer improvements
- Application has been filed electronically and they are in the process of reviewing it and it looks very favorable
- The interest rate on the loan portion is lower than the interest rate for the bonding that was passed a year or two ago
- Hopefully the infrastructure construction could start in the spring of 2021
- A general discussion ensued regarding the Route 164 water and sewer project and the Heritage River Village project. Please refer to the meeting tape for additional details

E. Green Earth – 238 East Main Street, PWC Site – Project Update

- M. Tristany noted that First Selectman Todd Babbitt and Green Earth have filed a grant application with the CT Department of Economic and Community Development for funding to clean up the underground site conditions
- M. Tristany noted that Green Earth does have a redevelopment mixed use plan for the 17-acre property that will consist of a retail/office structure along Route 201 and a combination of housing types

New Business – Continued from earlier tabling

Presentations by Attorney William Sweeney, Partner TCORS, and James Rossman, Principal of Stadia Engineering Associates regarding a proposed Technology Park District Zoning Text Amendment Change and the Development of Data Centers in Griswold.

- Chairman T. Giard noted that James Rossman has arrived and asked Attorney William Sweeney if he was set to make his presentation
- Attorney William Sweeney introduced himself as a partner with the Law Firm of TCORS, located in New London, CT.
- W. Sweeney also introduced James Rossman, Principal with the engineering firm Stadia Engineering Associates, also located in New London, CT.
- W. Sweeney stated that they are representing GotSPACE, LLC a Hyper Scale Data Center developer, and further noted that the GotSPACE C.E.O., is Thomas Quinn.
- W. Sweeney noted that the GotSPACE team consists of nationally recognized Data Center experts
- W. Sweeney further noted that data centers as a use typically have developed in built up areas and in rural areas as well.
- W. Sweeney stated that data centers require a lot of power to operate. Hyper Scale facilities are designed to shift their power loads. They are state-of-the-art designed buildings with state-of-the-art electronics and backup power systems.

- W. Sweeney commented that new legislation was recently put into law by the CT General Assembly to address Data Centers in CT.
- W. Sweeney stated that companies like Facebook, Instagram, Google, and cloud-based services are constantly looking for areas in which to construct new data center facilities. It was further noted that the medical and insurance industries also look for data centers to store their records.
- W. Sweeney noted that Data Centers are not here in CT for the following four reasons.
 - Corporate Tax Incentive
 - Inexpensive Power
 - Ready access to Fiber optics
 - Predictable regulatory Environment
- The cost of taxes and utilities in the Northeast have precluded the development of Data Centers.
- Data Centers are a tax deferred industry with no corporate taxes and no real estate taxes.
- W. Sweeney noted that the Town of Griswold Board of Selectmen recently signed a "Host Agreement" and the Town will get an annual PILOT Payment for each Data Center that is constructed in Griswold.
- W. Sweeney further stated that Gotspace is working with the local Jewett City D.P.U. regarding power and we have access to fiber optic trunk lines along our interstate highway systems.
- W. Sweeney stated that Gotspace is reaching out to towns regarding permitting at the local level as Data Centers have an inherent need for "flexibility" in the local zoning approval process.
- W. Sweeney noted that we have two major sites in Griswold that are under contract to share with you tonight for the location of Data Centers.
- W. Sweeney turned the discussion over to James Rossman to talk about the two Griswold sites that are under contract for Data Center Development.
- J. Rossman stated that he is responsible for the site / civil aspect of the Data Center developments.
- J. Rossman referenced the Route 164 / Barber Road Property and noted the following:
 - Three (3) Data Centers proposed
 - Two (2) that require 32 megs of "IT" power and 44 megs of power for peak demand
 - One (1) that requires 16 megs of "IT" power and 22 megs of power for peak demand
- J. Rossman noted that the sites are limited by the current available power.
- J. Rossman commented that we are not a full engineering design, but the Route 164 / Barber Road site has detailed wetland mapping completed.
- J. Rossman referred to the two conceptual plans that were placed for the Commission members to see
- J. Rossman noted that the Data Centers are 90% occupied by computer servers and electrical devices. A small portion is dedicated to office space. The Data Center halls are climate controlled to run at a certain temperature year-round. The servers and electronics and servers require a super dry environment.
- Data centers have a low occupancy rate and an extremely low traffic count. A 32 meg Data Center will have approximately 45 to 60 employees and three shifts of workers.
- J. Rossman stated that the parking requirement will need to be changed. Instead of parking spaces based on the building square footage, parking will need to be scaled down based on the number of employees. The number of spaces required would be approximately 60 to 70 spaces.

- J. Rossman further commented that the Data Centers will need potable water and sanitary sewer access.
- J. Rossman referenced the former Polinsky property and noted that seven (7) 32 meg Data Centers are planned for this property. We know what infrastructure is needed and where it currently is.
- J. Rossman noted that the building that are shown in the conceptual drawings are not necessarily the actual buildings that would be constructed. Each Data Center has their own standard building.
- J. Rossman noted that we are not showing any signage as some Data Centers want signage and some do not.
- J. Rossman noted that Data Centers are highly secured facilities and operations. Public access is not permitted. Employee or vender access only.
- J. Rossman responded possibly. Any hyper scale facilities lend themselves to governmental entities.
- J. Rossman referenced a document in the package that lists several existing hyperscale data center developments.
- J. Rossman further noted that other users that move a lot of data will locate here.
- J. Rossman stated that Data Centers will locate where there is a heavy data user.
- J. Rossman noted that we will be working with the municipal power grid (ISO New England) there is approximately 1,000 to 1,500 megs of power that is generated but not used.
- J. Rossman currently using air heat exchangers on the outside of the buildings. Some capacity for geothermal systems.
- J. Rossman commented yes within the building but n exterior to the building.
- J. Rossman is familiar with 5G. We are fiber optically connected.
- J. Rossman commented yes. Gotspace will control the entire site.
- J. Rossman pointed to the "purple" areas on the conceptual drawing and noted that these are the mapped wetland areas on the property.
- J. Rossman defined the term "Dark Fiber" which is the industry standard name for existing fiber optic conduit without fiber optic lines in it.
- Commissioner E. Kudlis asked if these facilities use gas.
- J. Rossman noted sometimes for backup generation but we are using diesel backup generators.
- J. Rossman commented that we will either be upgrading the power lines themselves or upgrading the lines to the substations and adding on to the substations to suit their power needs. Currently working with the JCDPU on this.
- J. Rossman replied no, it will become the property of the Jewett City Water Company.
- J. Rossman further noted that the tower will be adequately sized to facilitate the needs of the Route 164 area and the needs of the Jewett City Water Company
- W. Sweeney further noted that the Town's Attorney Mark Branse had reviewed our existing zoning regulations and had determined that data centers would fit in as "offices."
- W. Sweeney commented not specifically. We need to have the ability to say that we have pre-approved sites in Griswold that will meet your specific needs.
- W. Sweeney further stated that the designs for Google, Apple data centers will be completely different from each other in terms of building design, landscaping, and site layout.
- W. Sweeney referenced his draft text "Overlay Zone" proposed regulation that is designed to give inherent flexibility at a Master Plan level, but still need to fine tune their specific site plan.
- W. Sweeney passed out a flow chart that compared the current site plan process and the Master Plan process. He further noted that a lot of communities use master Plan concepts.

- Town Planner M. Tristany reminded the Commission that the Dakota Partners Oak Tree Village housing development zoning was a Master Plan Overlay Zone specifically for the Route 164 site for Work Force Housing.
- W. Sweeney mentioned that Stonington and Waterford have Master Plan Floating Zones.
- W. Sweeney referenced his Technology Park District Text Amendment.
- W. Sweeney noted that a 32-meg building will pay the Town of Griswold an annual PIOLT (Payment in lieu of taxes) of \$1.5 Million Dollars.
- W. Sweeney noted that because the Griswold Board of Selectman was one of the first communities to sign the “Host Agreement,” Griswold is one of, if not the “TOP” contender for Data Center development in the State.
- Amazon wants to hear that there is a Town in eastern Connecticut that is already set up to permit the development of data centers.
- Town Planner M. Tristany stated that this has been a three (3) year project that collectively we have been working on and the effort has finally come to fruition with William Sweeney, Jim Rossman and Tom Quinn the owner of Gotspace, LLC.

7. Other Matters – None

9. Adjournment

- Commissioner Lach made a motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. which was seconded by C. Geer the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mario J. Tristany, Jr.

Mario J. Tristany, Jr.
Town Planner & Technical Staff to the EDC