



Town of Griswold



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GRISWOLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2009

GRISWOLD TOWN HALL

I. PUBLIC HEARING SPECIAL MEETING (7:00 P.M.)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Thomas Giard, Jr. called this public hearing & special meeting of the Griswold Economic Development Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Thomas Giard, Jr., Vice Chairman Melvin Jetmore Paul Lach, Chris Hargus, Matthew Baber, Town Planner Carl Fontneau, and Recording Secretary Donna Szall.

3. Determination of Quorum

T. Giard stated that there is a quorum for this special meeting of the Economic Development Commission.

4. Matter Presented for Public Comment

A. Presentation of Grant Proposal for EPA Cleanup Funds at 226 East Main Street, Jewett City. Should this grant application for \$200,000 be successful, it would be combined with significant local matching funds and in-kind services to remediate known hazardous substances and contaminants at 226 East Main Street. This 2.3 acre parcel (formerly part of Triangle Plastic Wire and Cable) is now owned by the Town of Griswold.

T. Giard asked C. Fontneau to give a presentation describing the granting process for the EPA Clean up funds. C. Fontneau stated that one of the requirements for the grant was to hold a public hearing for input from the public for ideas for a use for the property. He explained the summary cover letter that formally request funding in the amount of \$200,000 for clean up of the soils that includes testing of the treated soils of contamination and hazardous substances. He explained that Tighe & Bond will be doing the Phase III of the environmental sight assessment. The remedial action plan will be reviewed by CTDEP, site coordinator to be approved; and the estimate of the cost of remediation to determine the actual cost for remediation for an amount up to \$200,000 that will include matching cash funds of approximately \$40,000 and in-kind services. He explained that it is a three year grant, put the town proposes to complete the grant in two years. C. Fontneau stated that the Economic Development Commission is taking the lead in this proposal because of their participation in the Municipal Development Plan; the Planning and Zoning Commission will participate in rezoning the area when the use is determined.

C. Fontneau explained the Threshold Criteria of applicant eligibility, site ownership, and explained the Threshold Criteria is passed in to Region 1, and then it will be sent to National that will look at the Ranking Criteria. He explained the Ranking Criteria based on community need for health, welfare and environment that explains the need for the remediation funds within the context of the neighborhood, the economy of the town; and he stated that the more documentation presented the better off the Town will be to obtain this funding.

C. Fontneau stated that this 2.3 acre parcel has been the location of a vacant building since 1995 and there has been evidence of vandalism where much of the salvage has been removed. He explained that there was a need for fire safety, as well as it being an attractive nuisance. He explained that the median household income of \$39,063 to \$46,333 based on the 2000 Census showing 12% elderly, 48% housing built prior to 1939. C. Fontneau explained the financial need. C. Fontneau explained the financial need that the property is not contributing to the grand list of the town. He explained the budget for this project. C. Fontneau explained the cooperative agreement oversight. C. Fontneau explained the community outreach. He explained the cash matches and in-kind services. C. Fontneau explained the legal support. He explained prior brownfields grants.

C. Fontneau explained the types of projects for the site and stated that this public hearing is to gather input from the public for their ideas for used for this site. He explained the project benefits, economic benefits and/or green space and environmental benefits from infrastructure reuse and sustainable reuse.

T. Giard asked for comments from the public.

M. Jetmore stated that the oil tanks next door will limit the development of the site. C. Fontneau stated that one possibility is to sell the site to the owner of oil tanks. There was discussion of this matter.

Donald Eldridge, 256 East Main Street, the other side of the oil tanks, explained that he was a resident of town for 34 years. He stated that the oil tank owner was interested in that property and that he was interested in his property as well but that the cost of clean up was not viable for him for the site. M. Jetmore asked what his property was zoned. D. Eldridge stated that it was zoned residential.

T. Giard asked C. Fontneau if the town got funding for demolition, remediation and there was cleanup for the site, at that point, it would be more attractive for the oil company next door. C. Fontneau stated yes, but for this proposal it would be better to identify a use, there would be more attention to receiving funding from the EPA. T. Giard stated that if there was a commitment from the oil company would that help the proposal. C. Fontneau stated that it would make it less attractive. M. Jetmore stated that it would have to stay industrial and the zone could not be changed. There was discussion of this matter including that a clean, 2.3 acre site could attract an assisted living facility on an ice cream factory with an store front ice cream parlor that would be compatible with the neighborhood,

D. Eldridge asked what the EPA would be most likely to see there on that 2.3 acre site. Steve Mikutel, resident of Griswold, stated that sometimes agencies have a list of priorities that they list higher than others. C. Fontneau stated that they would like to see something that cleans up the area, looks nice, and creates permanent jobs. There was discussion of this matter.

T. Giard asked if a letter could be obtain from the ice cream manufacture for a letter of intent with an outline for that which the site would be used.

D. Eldridge stated that there is a need for family entertainment in the town. T. Giard asked what type of entertainment. He stated that he submitted an applicant to use his property at 252 East Main Street for an electric go cart facility called FunKarts on a track from toddlers, teenagers, moms, and dads. M. Jetmore asked if it would be inside. D. Eldridge stated no but it could be covered on his personal property. He stated that the property in question could be used for the FunKarts for a recreational use.

M. Jetmore stated that the Triangle parcel across the street would play a role in what is developed on the 2.3 acre parcel. C. Fontneau stated that the owner of the Triangle parcel has potential plans to build 150 town house units but there is no zoning in town to meet the residential density. There was discussion of this matter including that the least cost to clean up would be encapsulating the soil and building up.

T. Giard asked D. Eldridge to send a letter of intent for a description for the potential use of the site and what types of problems would be solved. D. Eldridge stated that he could write a letter with his proposal. C. Fontneau stated that he would need the letter by October 13, Tuesday and will add it as an exhibit for a commercial recreational activity. M. Jetmore asked how many people would be hired. D. Eldridge stated that having a indoor facility would create a number of jobs for year-round staff.

M. Jetmore stated that there are chemical that can be put on the soil and devours the different contaminants and the soil does have to be removed. There was discussion of this matter.

T. Giard asked for other comments.

S. Mikutel stated that we should be getting input from the consultants hired by the town and they have contacts in the private sector that may be useful in how we use the site and they can help us to market this site. S. Mikutel stated that we must think of the future housing needs of the community such as an assisted living facility and there is a need for this type of care. C. Fontneau stated that Cynthia Kata, Borough Warden who could not be here; but she wanted it made clear that this 2.3 acre parcel could be used for an assisted living facility since the closure of Haven Health Care. There was discussion of this matter.

S. Mikutel stated that he wanted to see all the option explored for this site and not just focusing on this site for commercial development and to keep our options T. Giard stated that we certainly will keep the options open. There was discussion of this matter.

Phil Anthony, First Selectman, stated that he spoke to Al Wolpert about a week ago who asked him what the town would like to see on the large Triangle parcel. P. Anthony stated that a high end condo and mix use commercial development was suggested by the previous owner; and I encouraged him to come forward with a plan. P. Anthony stated that for the small 2.3 acre parcel owned by the town has liability insurance for \$11 million under the town umbrella policy, and there is the minimum fire insurance policy for \$4,700. He stated that after winning grant funding for the clean up process, the town would like to put this parcel back on the market. He stated that there are three possible developers; first, was the owner of the oil company to whom he spoke to a month ago; second, was a warehousing company who he has not heard from again; and third, a speculator of property who may develop it commercially.

S. Mikutel stated that it would be helpful if we knew more definitely what the use would be for the larger Triangle parcel across the street that this smaller parcel can be tied into it for a commercial use. S. Mikutel stated that we can draw some assumptions and it can help us to get this grant and that remediation may not be that expensive. There was discussion of this matter.

P. Anthony stated that Tighe and Bond stated that the small parcel has minor contamination and that the Triangle parcel may not be as contaminated as suspected based on Phase I and Phase II. We can work with the owner to complete the Phase III.

T. Giard asked C. Fontneau if he had enough material and input from the public hearing. He stated that he has more evidence to revise the Draft. He will contact the ice cream manufacturer to submit a letter for a conceptual letter. He stated that if Mr. Eldridge can submit a letter of intent for the use of the 2.3 acre parcel for a commercial activity. He asked for a confirmatory letter from the first selectmen. He stated that Cynthia Kata will submit a letter regarding the assisted living facility.

P. Lach asked D. Eldridge to canvas his neighborhood for their ideas for uses for the site. D. Eldridge stated that he could add their ideas to his letter. He stated that he grew up here and he would like to see something positive.

T. Giard asked for any additional ideas or comments at this time.

S. Mikutel stated that if we can tie in our parcel with the private parcel across the street with that private developer to work with the town. T. Giard asked if the developer can send a letter outlining the ideas of the large parcel. P. Anthony stated that he will call Al Wolpert a conceptual plan for a possible use of the Triangle parcel to build a case to the EPA grant.

5. Adjournment

T. Giard asked for any additional ideas or comments, T. Giard asked for a motion to adjourn. M. Jetmore made a motion to adjourn. P. Lach seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Szall
Recording Secretary