

Town of Windsor Locks
Economic and Industrial Development Commission
Meeting at Town Hall, 2nd Floor
July 25, 2024
6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Recording Secretary at 6:32 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chaiman Doug Glazier, Frances Morena-D’Elia, Neal Cunningham, Shane O’Connor, Bob Crochetiere, Kurt Brace

Absent: Dave Montemerlo, Alan Gannuscio, Malekhai Paquette

Guests: Bluevale Capital – Jefferson Huang, Scott Chen & Chrissy Martel
Attorney Paul Smith – Representing Bluevale Capital

3. Approval of the Minutes from June 27, 2024

Kurt Brace made a motion to approve the minutes from June 27, 2024. Neal Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

4. Public Input on EIDC Matters Only – None

5. Action Items

a) Planning and Development Highlights

1) 5 Ella Grasso Turnpike – Presentation by Bluevale Capital

Scott Chen of Bluevale Capital gave a synopsis of the company and described a few of their completed projects as well as the demographics of the rental clientele occupying the residences. He described their intention to rehabilitate the property at 5 Ella Grasso Turnpike – Bradley Inn from a hotel to a residential space with efficiency and 1-bedroom units. A handout was provided to the commissioners to further illustrate their plans. The Commission was given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the project.

b) Main Street Redevelopment – Update

Chairman Doug Glazier read into the record a letter by First Selectman Scott Storms to update the Commission on the progress of the Main Street redevelopment and other development highlights in town (included as part of the minutes).

6. Public Input – 5 Ella Grasso Turnpike

Barbara Palmer, 15 North Main St. – Barbara inquired about the number of units proposed and whether there would be subsidized housing. Attorney Paul Smith answered that the units will be offered at the market rate.

Bob Crochetiere asked about whether TIFF money will be used. There won’t be TIFF money used for this project.

Eric Marsh, 94 South Elm St. – although he is enthusiastic about the project, he stressed the importance of keeping the amount of affordable housing in Windsor Locks above 10%.

Peggy Sayers, 477 Denslow St. – clarified that the town is already at 12% occupancy rate for subsidized housing and will be higher with the development on Main St. She reminded the Commission about other projects that were proposed for this location and the property behind it. She stressed that it is important to keep access to the property behind this one so as not to lose it. She also commented on the fire codes being brought up to date.

John Savino, 128 Elm St. – likes the proposal and the likelihood that it would bring more people into our town.

Bob Crochetiere inquired about pricing for the rental units. We learned that the proposed cost, at this point, would be \$1,200 for an efficiency and \$1.600 for a 1-bedroom unit.

7. Discussion for an August Meeting

A motion was made by Neal Cunningham and seconded by Kurt Brace to cancel the August meeting scheduled for August 22, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Open Time

9. Adjournment

Neal Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Crochetiere seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Mercey

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EIDC Recording Secretary

EIDC Update – Scott A. Storms, First Selectman

The downtown landscape changes daily as the new and historic train station projects continue to re-shape our Main Street. The acquisition and planned development of the former Windsor Locks Commons promises transformational change, bringing needed housing and retail areas to our Town. Progress on the new train station continues on schedule, and the historic train station build out is in design phase with construction plans being coordinated with CTDOT. Trinity Financial, having acquired the WL Commons earlier this year, is preparing its plans for a 130-unit workforce housing and retail project, and is in the final stages of design to enable town and state permit submission supported by a pending \$10 Million State of CT CIF grant application for infrastructure development. The Trinity site also received a brownfield assessment soil assessment grant which we are also working to complete. The town is currently working with all parties to bring about the Main Street reconfiguration along the train station and Trinity sites for traffic mitigation, and we are working with the State to resolve outstanding issues with Chestnut Street funding. Additionally, we are attempting to resolve ongoing water infiltration issues along the Main Street/North Main Street corridor for WPCA plant efficiency. All this activity demands an amazing amount of time and effort from our Town Building, Planning, Finance, and DPW Departments while the Departments continue their work on other capital and development projects throughout the Town. It should be noted that the lack of a full time Town Planner is impactful and is burdening the productivity of the Building Department to respond. The Town staff is working hard to coordinate all activities to bring about a positive result for our community. Meetings and conversations relating to these projects continue daily to support the ever-changing needs of Main Street and our Town.

In June, I met with representatives of Bluevale Capital LLC which is proposing to establish up to 48 new legally conforming, long term rental units through rehabilitation of an underutilized hotel property located at 5 & 11 Ella Grasso Turnpike. Subject to compliance with the Town's planning and zoning standards, this project will enhance our ability to provide workforce housing options for those who choose to live in Windsor Locks. As First Selectman, I am in support of this project (see letter attached).

In mid-July, the Silverman Group, a New Jersey based development company overseeing the leasing and management of industrial and warehousing sites in more than 20 states, acquired two properties on Hamilton Road along Route 20 and located within the Bradley Airport Development Zone. The proposed project, when completed, will offer more than 250,000 square feet of warehouse space to future tenants. The Town is working to facilitate permit processing, infrastructure logistics, and state support for this development project. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 18, 2024 with various officials and dignitaries in attendance.

It should be noted that all of these activities present great challenges to the building department of our Town and other associated staff as we currently have limited professional Planning and building professional resources available. Despite a diligent search for a full-time planner, the Town has received little or no interest in the position, and the Town is currently using consultants on a part-time basis for such services. More funding and a more aggressive search must be conducted in the near future to obtain a qualified professional planner.