

**Town of East Haven, CT**  
**Economic Development Commission Minutes**  
**May 23, 2011**  
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**PRESENT:** Robert Limoncelli, Chairman  
Magdalen Sparaco  
Frank Alvarado

**STAFF:** Paul Hongo, Dir.

**ABSENT:** Jerome Pacelli

**PUBLIC:** Fred Musante, EH Patch  
Vin Camera, T.Council  
Dan McCann

Chairman Limoncelli called the Meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** made by Commissioner Sparaco and seconded by Commissioner Alvarado to approve the minutes of the April 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting that were distributed by e-mail. All were in favor, none were opposed and none abstained. **MOTION CARRIED**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Hongo stated that he didn't have anything to report other than to discuss the next steps to take after the survey results are discussed, which Chairman Limoncelli would be going over with the commission this evening.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Town Councilman Vin Camera spoke to the commission regarding the money that was allotted by the Town Council for a Part Time Economic Development Coordinator. It would be a 19 hour a week position and unfortunately he did not have the exact amount of money that would be allocated as the salary. He pushed to get funding for this position so that we could continue to move forward to help businesses in East Haven and the get some new businesses in Town. Director Hongo stated that the next step would be putting a job description together so that the Town could advertise for this position. Councilman Camera suggested that they try to get someone with experience that would have the resources and knowledge to put more "meat" in the efforts to bring new businesses to East Haven.

At this time, Chairman Limoncelli handed out copies of the survey to all in attendance and discussed the results at length. Approximately 700 surveys were sent out and only

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60 were returned. That is a 10% return rate which he stated was good for a business survey as well as it being the first survey sent out.

Councilman Camera stated that he thought the survey was a good base for the new Coordinator to get started with. He hoped that the Coordinator would take the results of the survey and follow through with it as it serves a purpose as to what the current businesses in Town are looking for and how to bring new ones in. Chairman Limoncelli asked for input from the members regarding the survey. Commissioner Alvarado stated that he was surprised that 45% of the businesses would expand especially in this climate.

Director Hongo stated that nobody was really negative with their answers but some had constructive criticism for the Town. Paul asked Chairman Limoncelli if the Business Expo would be held on the Green at the Fall Festival again in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Limoncelli stated yes it would. Director Hongo stated that maybe this would boost the local economy with local businesses being showcased. Chairman Limoncelli stated that he thought the gas prices will influence peoples' decisions to shop locally as opposed to driving longer distances to save money.

Councilman Camera stated that the Town Council is working on a project as to what to do with the 200 Tyler Street building. There is an Ad-Hoc committee that has been put together with residents from Town and they have been meeting to discuss the options for the property, including a possible Government Center or Senior Housing or a Community Center so that they decisions will be placed on the ballot for residents to vote on in November.

At this time, Chairman Limoncelli recognized Dan McCann who thanked Chairman Limoncelli for allowing him to speak. Mr. McCann stated that he agreed with Councilman Camera with regard to the 200 Tyler Street property. He stated that no matter if you're a Democrat, Republican or an Independent; we should all work together for the betterment of the Town. He agreed that a Government Center would be beneficial as it would consolidate all agencies in Town so you weren't running all over town to get what you needed. He also agreed that the survey was a great start to growing businesses in East Haven. He stated he did his own investigation of businesses and located 78 vacant storefronts. He spoke of missing opportunities to get more businesses here and that we are not getting revenue from the businesses that are empty storefronts. He stated that East Haven is unique as opposed to New Haven, not to mention that parking is horrendous there. He also stated that there is always funding

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available and maybe the commission could possibly contact larger towns and cities to find out how they revitalized their town, how they reached out to other resources etc., to bring businesses in. Commissioner Alvarado stated he had a friend who was the EDC for Meriden and he could contact her to come speak to the commission.

Chairman Limoncelli stated that he and Director Hongo were involved with a businessman from out of state. They met with the father, who lives here in town, and then with the owner, took them around Town to show them what we had to offer and he went ahead and purchased the business. It wasn't stated at this time what that business was. Chairman Limoncelli also suggested that he want to bring other elements in town, such as local educators, non- chamber business members, and administrators together to look at data and come up with a plan (sort of a symposium). Commissioner Sparaco stated that she thought it was an excellent idea to bring those kinds of people to the commission to sit, think and ask for their input into this project. Councilman Camera suggested talking to someone like the owner of Goody's and find out what they think they have done to stay so successful here in town. Dan McCann suggested that they add some public as well, someone non- political, such as a mom or dad with kids here in the school system to give their input as well. Chairman Limoncelli asked Director Hongo to sit on this as well, as his time permits. Director Hongo stated this was a great thing to have a dedicated person working just for Economic Development. It was a great foundation to get things moving forward.

There being no further business to come before the agency, a motion to adjourn was made at 8:25 p.m. by Commissioner Alvarado and seconded by Commissioner Sparaco. All were in favor, none opposed, and none abstained.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda S. LaLuna  
Clerk