

BERLIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, December 15th, 2020

240 KENSINGTON ROAD, BERLIN – 5:30 P.M.
(VIRTUAL ONLY)

<https://townofberlin.my.webex.com/townofberlin.my/j.php?MTID=m7250ac8ac6d464459ba6f59e65e730ca>

Meeting number: 132 760 7197 Password: anKd6MpgE37 (26536674 from phones and video systems)

Join by phone - +1-408-418-9388 Access code: 132 760 7197

1. Call To Order
2. Audience of Citizens
3. Minutes of November Meeting
4. Façade Improvement/Abatement
 - Newport Extension Request
 - Tax Abatement Language
5. Planning & Zoning
 - Changes to the BT-D zone
 - Contractors Allowed in BT-1 and BT-2
 - Gas Stations
6. Events/Marketing
 - Holiday Lighting Contest
 - Ribbon Cuttings/Ground Breakings
 - o M C Barber
 - o Adaptive Therapeutic Massage
7. Commissioner Discussion
 - 2021 Meeting Dates
 - Officers
 - Secretary of State / Town Clerk's Office
8. Adjournment

Town of Berlin

Department of Economic Development

BERLIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Minutes

Monday, November 9, 2020

EDC Members in person / Public by Conference Call – 6 PM

Berlin Board of Education Conference Room
240 Kensington Road Berlin, CT

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

David Cyr, Chairman
Keith Bostrom
Peter Campanelli
Chris Coppola

Ed Egazarian, Vice-Chairman
Richard Chasse
Bob Sisti

STAFF:

Chris Edge, Economic Development Director

1. Call To Order

Chairman Cyr called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

2. Audience of Citizens – No one attended

3. Minutes of the October Special Meeting

Commissioner Campanelli made a motion modify the minutes by adding Tax Abatement to item #4. It will then read Façade Improvement/Tax Abatement. A motion was made by Commissioner Campanelli to accept the minutes as modified and was seconded by Commissioner Bostrom. It passed unanimously.

4. Façade Improvement/Tax Abatement

- Suburban Sports

Director Edge presented a letter from Keith Nappi, who is the owner of 25 Webster Square Road. He was approved for a façade grant in January 2020 for \$18,225.25. He is requesting an extension of 120 days. His reasoning is the pandemic as well as a loss of business. After some discussion, Commissioner Bostrom made a motion to give Keith Nappi (K D Realty) an extension for 120 days (to March 9, 2021) as has been what has been done for other applicants. It was seconded by Commissioner Chasse and passed unanimously.

- Steele Center @ Farmington Ave

Director Edge went through a letter from Tony Valenti, one of the 2 partners at Newport Realty Group. They have requested a tax abatement similar to what was given to John Orsini for the Turnpike Ridge development. As they are doing their project in phases, they have asked that the tax abatements are phased in as well which would be that once a building is complete, it would get the 10-year tax abatement. Commissioner Coppola mentioned that he would like to support

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Mark and Tony with the project and that we must be consistent. Their project is already beginning to change the face of Farmington Avenue. Commissioner Coppola made a motion to approve the tax abatement for Newport Realty Group with the tax abatement being phased in for each building once a certificate of occupancy is given. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Campanelli and approved unanimously.

- Dairy Queen – 806 Farmington Avenue

Discussion ensued questioning the status of the Dairy Queen façade application for Dairy Queen. Director Edge explained that the Planning & Zoning Commission considered the application at their November 5th meeting. They decided the look as presented was too corporate and not enough New England. With some back and forth between the applicant and the Commission, it was decided that a “stone-type” look for the first 3 to 5 feet from the ground and a clapboard or similar material above the stone work. The Commission members were pleased that it will have a more village look to it when complete.

5. Planning & Zoning

- Mural

Director Edge mentioned that the mural on the side of the building at 384 Farmington Avenue is now in the hands of the Planner. Commissioner Campanelli said that action needs to be taken now. The Commission discussed this and announced their frustration with Good Cause Gifts moving ahead with a mural without any permission from any town department. Its sets a very bad precedent, which was expressed by Chairman Cyr. Murals were a discussion item on the agenda at the same Planning & Zoning meeting on November 5th. The P & Z Commission had asked that some regulations be put in place so that we do not see something with no approvals or that does not fit into the village area. But, by the next day, the mural was being worked on. Commissioner Coppola said that the Economic Development Commission took no steps beyond discussion in late 2019 and early 2020 on murals and that they or Director Edge never made any motions or gave any approvals. Without a 2nd body (Planning & Zoning or Town Council) blessing our recommendation, we have no authority to approve things like murals.

- Outside Seating

Through a recent Executive Order from the Governor, outside seating is allowed until February 9th, 2021. This is a good thing, but will Berlin residents be willing to sit outside during the colder months of November, December, January and February? If so much seating is allowed outside, why not increase the amount of people inside? We will keep an eye on this and look to get a restaurant owner to our December or January meeting.

- Contractors in the BT-1 and BT-2

The Planning & Zoning Commission has been approached to see if they would be open to allowing “clean” contractors on the Berlin Turnpike. At present, they are not allowed. Two properties in mind could be dramatically changed if this use is allowed including the former fork lift building at 529 Berlin Turnpike and the former garage at 1162 Berlin Turnpike. The

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Planning & Zoning Commission heard about this at their November 5th meeting and seemed amenable to add language to our Zoning Regulations. Vice-chairman Egazarian mentioned that he is in favor of this, but is concerned as there are 2 property owners which have turned their contractor properties into messes. He asked that we be careful how it is written so that we have buildings which are visually pleasing (4 feet of stone), nice fencing and only allow storage behind or within a building. A motion was made to support the “clean” contractors in the BT-1 and BT-2 zones by Commissioner Sisti, but that we be sure the language will minimize any unintended consequences that can occur. It was seconded by Commissioner Coppola and passed unanimously. The last piece is that the Commission asked for a list of sites or properties which could be developed or redeveloped if this language is in fact added and if we should consider adding a minimum acreage.

- 555 Wethersfield Road (Follow-Up)

Director Edge told of a firm which is interested in moving into the building at 555 Wethersfield Road in town. This property is now under contract to be purchased from a firm in an adjacent town. To make the purchase happen, the buyer is looking to have a tenant lease some space. The tenant is a firm that does wholesale and distribution for firms in the landscaping and similar fields. After a quick discussion about allowed uses in the PI zone, Commissioner Sisti made a motion that the Commission supports a wholesale firm to locate at 555 Wethersfield Road. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coppola and passed unanimously.

6. Events/Celebration

- Ribbon Cuttings/Ground Breakings

A ribbon cutting will be done at Box Bistro at their Main Street location on Friday, November 13th. Though they have been operating there for some time, we never did a ribbon cutting. Boss Grill did their ribbon cutting on November 6th. It was very well attended and they plan to have counter service and to-go during lunchtime and have table service after 5 pm. They are waiting on the state sign-off for their liquor permit, but they will have beer and wine soon.

- Halloween

Commissioner Sisti stated that he is thrilled at the event and how it went. He saw kids and families from Main Street down almost to Stop N Shop. With maybe 300 kids it was dearly needed in Berlin. With the challenges of COVID and families unsure of the near future, families seemed to have a good time. It was expressed that we keep this in place or grow it in future years.

7. Commissioner Discussion

- Promotion

Commissioner Egazarian said that he is interested in having more monies in place for marketing and promotion which we should request for the 2021-22 fiscal year. Director Edge stated that for this year, we had \$11,000 for marketing and promotion. He thought an ask for an additional \$5,000 to \$9,000 seems reasonable. Commissioner Sisti added that as the Board of Finance says

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they will help us if we request monies and we should shoot higher, say \$50,000. A few commissioners agreed that \$5K to \$9K is too little. From here, we would likely need some plan or a conceptual plan as approaching the Board of Finance hat in hand is a bad idea especially for such a large amount. Vice-Chairman Egazarian, Commissioner Coppola and Sisti all mentioned they would be willing to work with Director Edge on some type of plan. A few areas to look at are to promote the fact that since early 2015, we have seen over 1000 jobs created due to firms coming to Berlin and expanding in Berlin. Whatever we do should have a visual impact as well as a presence online and in some type of hard copy or similar (billboard?). Commissioner Coppola again said that the on and off-ramps for the highway exits in Berlin seem to be a good avenue to explore. Lastly, Commissioner Egazarian mentioned benches and the potential that people could donate them in honor of or in memory or a loved one. More information is needed on both the off-ramps and benches due to cost, who would install, etc.

- Light Up Berlin

Commissioner Coppola asked if we are going to hold the Light Up Berlin as we did in 2019. Support for doing this again was verbalized by the Commission. He continued with an idea to make winning it something special. His idea is to have a Leg trophy like the one in The Christmas Story. The Commission members were very intrigued by this and thought we should do it.

- Tree Lighting

Commissioner Bostrom asked if we are doing a Christmas tree lighting and if so, should be shoot for a HUGE tree or at least 30 feet high. Maybe look to put it on the Steele Center project property as that has a great amount of visibility. A competition was mentioned for whom could/would donate a tree. Director Edge thought a tree at 903 Farmington Avenue (in the green triangle) seems like a good idea, but that the fire departments have done the tree lighting for years. He would find out whether they would be doing it this year.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Egazarian moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Sisti. The motion passed unanimously. The time was 7:05 p.m.

cedge

From: Anthony Valenti <tony@lovleydevelopment.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 11:50 AM
To: cedge
Subject: Marching Funds Program - 848 Farmington Avenue-Berlin, CT

Hello Chris,

We are respectfully requesting a 120 day extension to the deadline of the matching funds grant program for the property referenced above. Ownership is working diligently to identify a tenant for the commercial space where the second phase of the patio would be located, and we want to be sure we spend these funds appropriately and provide the best return for all parties involved.

Please don't hesitate to let me know should you have questions or need any additional information.

Thank you,

--

Tony V.



Tony Valenti
Newport Realty Group, LLC
Lovley Development, Inc.
710 Main Street, Suite 11
Plantsville, CT 06479
Off. (860) 276-8068
Fax. (860) 621-5810
NewportRealtyGroupCT.com

Town of Berlin Tax Abatement Program
Approved July 21, 2020 Proposed Dec. 81, 2020

The Town of Berlin, Connecticut recognizes the importance of continued economic growth in our community and has adopted the following tax abatement framework. Projects must be consistent with State Statutes. The Town policy is that projects must involve real property improvements for at least one of the following: (1) for office use; (2) for manufacturing use; (3) for warehouse, storage or distribution use; (4) for information technology; or (5) for restaurants, (6) new retail developments or redevelopment of existing retail properties that involve substantial renovations or restoration of the exterior of the building and improvements to landscaping including automotive dealerships selling new vehicles or, (7) recreation facilities or (8) ~~mixed-use developments~~, as defined in Section 8-13 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The following abatement schedule will be used by the Town Council as a guideline based upon factors including the investment made and other considerations concerning the quality of the project and its consistency with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development made on each project. The Town Council must act to approve each project and its specific abatement schedule.

For real property improvements of greater than \$150,000 if the project is for office use, for manufacturing use, for warehouse, storage or distribution use, recreation facilities, newly developed for restaurants, retail use or information technology the Town may offer:

For real property improvements of greater than \$12,500,000 (Twelve Million Five-Hundred Thousand Dollars) for any type of eligible use above, the Town Council may offer:

Abatement Schedule:

Commercial									
Year 1	70%	Year 2	70%	Year 3	60%	Year 4	60%	Year 5	50 60%
			50 60%	Year 8	46 0%	Year 9	30 50%	Year 10	20 50%

Residential (If Within A Mixed-Use Project)

~~Year 1 — 80% — Year 2 — 70% — Year 3 — 60% — Year 4 — 50% — Year 5 — 40%~~

Application Procedure

The tax abatement program application should be submitted to the Economic Development Director for consideration for a recommendation by the Economic Development Commission to the Town Council. If approved by the Economic Development Commission, then property owners within 500 feet of the proposed development site will be notified 7 days in advance of the meeting where the Town Council will consider a tax partnership application.

Applications will be accepted and considered under the tax abatement policy in effect prior to the effective date of this amendment provided that any such projects will be required to have submitted an application for project approval to the Berlin Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission or Berlin Planning and Zoning Commission prior to the effective date of the amendment. In addition, they must have received all project permit approvals by one year from the effective date of this amendment and have secured building permits and started construction of both the commercial and residential portions of the project prior to two years from the effective date of this amendment.

Amendment effective date: Two weeks from date of Town Council passage

F. Berlin Turnpike Development Zone (BTD). (5/9/2019 date)

1. *Purposes.* This section of the Regulations is intended to allow the commission to modify some of the use and dimensional standards in the underlying zoning districts of the BT-1, BT-2 or PS-B zones along the Berlin Turnpike, in order to:
 - a. Promote the development of a mixed use development including housing opportunities.
4. *Special permit uses.* In the event a property owner wishes to utilize the provisions of the BTD district, the following uses shall be permitted:
 - a. All permitted uses in the underlying zoning district subject to site plan or special permit approvals.
 - b. Mixed use development consisting of new commercial and residential uses as a special permit use provided that commercial uses shall constitute a minimum of 25% of the floor area of the overall development.
5. *Permitted accessory buildings, structures and uses.* The following accessory buildings, structures and uses shall be permitted:
 - a. Any accessory building, structure or use customarily incidental and directly related to the operation of the principal uses.
6. *Dimensional standards.* Dimensional standards shall be as approved by the *Commission* in order to support the allowed density, comply with any design guidelines, and mitigate any extraordinary adverse impacts of the development on nearby properties and as follows:
 - a. Commercial buildings shall be situated entirely or partially between the residential buildings and the Berlin Turnpike to provide screening between residential uses and the Berlin Turnpike.
 - b. Commercial uses shall be located entirely or partially within 240 ft from the Berlin Turnpike right-of-way to maintain the commercial corridor and provide screening between the residential uses and the Berlin Turnpike.
 - c. Residential uses shall be setback a minimum 240 ft from the Berlin Turnpike right-of-way.
 - d. Density. (9/11/2019)
 - i. Separate and distinct entrances shall be provided for first floor and upper story uses.
 - ii. There shall be a maximum of four (4) dwelling units per whole acre, or
 - iii. There shall be a maximum of eight (8) dwelling units per whole acre provided that twenty percent (20%) of the units are deed restricted as affordable housing pursuant to VIII.H.8, and no dwelling unit shall have more than one bedroom, including dens, offices or similar undesignated rooms, unless the individual building has more than ten (10) units per floor. If ten (10) or more units per floor, twenty percent (20%) of the units may have two (2) bedrooms per unit.
 - iv. A Master Plan is limited to a maximum of 200 residential units total.
 - e. Residential units shall provide for the following:
 - i. Studio units shall contain at least 500 square feet of living area.
 - ii. One-bedroom units shall contain at least 620 square feet of living area.
 - iii. Two-bedroom units shall contain at least 900 square feet of living area.
 - iv. Libraries, dens, dining rooms, studios or other similar separate rooms shall not be construed to be bedrooms.
 - f. After meeting the 10-acre minimum and all other dimensional requirements for the master plan area, the Commission may approve subdivision of the master plan area if it deems such subdivision beneficial and provided that parcels within the master plan area must meet or exceed the dimensional requirements of the underlying zone.
10. *Criteria for approval.* The commission shall review a development proposed within the BTD zone and may approve such application if the Commission finds that the proposed development conforms to the following criteria:
 - a. The overall development shall have pedestrian connectivity, with the commercial buildings and uses oriented towards the Berlin Turnpike, in close proximity to the street and to each other. The residential component shall be designated and designed to encourage pedestrian traffic toward the commercial uses along the Berlin Turnpike.
 - a-b. New commercial structures shall constitute a minimum of 25% of the floor area of the approved master plan. Existing commercial buildings in the development may be retained if such buildings and uses are compatible with the master plan and provided that the architectural style of the existing buildings is attractive and complementary to the area but they will not count toward the 25% commercial use requirement.
 - b-c. Surface parking areas shall generally be located so as to be convenient to the residential uses and the commercial parking shall be in close proximity to the commercial uses to encourage cross-utilization.
 - e-d. A detailed construction phasing plan shall be provided that outlines the sequencing the following but not limited to site grading, installation of utilities, parking areas and buildings. New commercial buildings sufficient to satisfy the 25% commercial use requirement must be constructed and have a certificate of occupancy issued before a certificate of occupancy will be issued for any residential uses included in the master plan.

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**2021 Economic Development Commission Meeting Schedule
Town Hall - Room 120 (Public Works Office)**

PROPOSED

Monday, January 4th, 2021

Monday February 1, 2021

Monday March 1, 2021

Monday, April 5, 2021

Monday, May 3, 2021

Monday, June 1, 2021

Monday, July 5, 2021

Monday, August 9, 2021

Monday, September 13th, 2021

Monday, October 4th, 2021

Monday, November 8th, 2021

Monday, December 6th, 2021

Monday, January 3rd, 2022

cedge

From: kwall
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2020 10:18 AM
To: cedge; 'Dave Cyr (davecyr@comcast.net)'
Cc: Arosha Jayawickrema
Subject: Trade Names and Business Licenses

Good Morning Chris and Dave –

As you know one of the duties of the Town Clerk is to process Trade Names. The Trade Name Certificate was originally established for consumer protection so that consumers could identify who was operating under a name other than their own. Conn State Statute 35-1.

The Secretary of the State Office (SOTS) is charged with managing the Partnerships, LLCs, Corporations etc.

The Governor has asked that different state agencies streamline the process for doing business in Connecticut. The state is providing \$7m to SOTS and \$6m to DAS to make it easier for businesses to conduct business in Connecticut. Chris Drake from SOTS has had several meetings with the Town Clerks Association to discuss the process and how we can provide better services.

The SOTS is proposing a central data base which would provide information for consumers and businesses. The Town Clerks would continue to process the Trade Names (many times the Sole Proprietor) in their usual manner but would also process them through the data base along with the state agencies.

The benefits to the businesses will be a one stop shop. The agent or owner can access the portal using one password. If they need to update the Annual Report to SOTS – pay a fee to DAS – obtain a license from Consumer Protection – it can all be done by using this portal. Also education will be provided to the businesses on the services that are provided by the state. It would probably also provide more consumer protection to the consumer.

SOTS has asked a couple of towns to reach out to small businesses to see if they would be willing to talk to Deloitte Consulting LLP about their interaction with the State, any services or support that would be helpful for them, and any pain points they are dealing with as it relates to operating in a COVID and shutdown environment.

I was hoping that maybe some members of EDC would be willing to speak to Deloitte or make some suggestions on some businesses that I could forward to them.

If you could let me know by the end of the day or as soon as possible, I will forward the contact information to Deloitte.

Thank you!

Kate Wall
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Berlin, CT 06037
Website: www.town.berlin.ct.us

www.facebook.com/TownBerlinCT