

TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Minutes March 8, 2023
Town Council Chambers with a Zoom option

Present

Bill Wadsworth
Bob Reeve
Phil Chabot
Pete Ramchandani
Warren Hua

Staff

Rose Ponte

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Wadsworth at 5:30 pm.

B. Public Comment

None noted

C. Town Farm Development Presentation

Ms. Rhonda Caron, manager of the Farmington Club, Mr. David Falt, director of engineering at Bozzuto's and their attorney, Mr. Chris Hoheb addressed the Commission and explained that the Polo Grounds received a special permit approval in 2016, the special permit was extended and made permanent in 2019. The conditions of that approval have caused some confusion and an inability for Town Farm Development to host certain events and make the operations more sustainable.

Town Farm Development has made a very large investments and substantial improvements to the property. They operate the Farmington Polo Club on this property, and also purchased and upgraded the property to rear of the Polo Grounds, the former Farmington Club.

Over this past summer, the Town's Planning Department received various complaints from the neighbors regarding noise associated with the events, the early morning hours of the events, and the number of events that take place during the Polo season which is June to October. Representatives from Town Farm Development met with the planning staff on several occasions to draft modifications to the permanent approvals. These modifications seek to clarify certain restrictions and also address the concerns expressed by their neighbors.

After the presentation, the Commissioners verified that these modifications would satisfy the neighbor's concerns and also allow Town Farm Development to continue making additional investments and improvements to the property. Attorney Hoheb and Mr. Falk both verified that these modifications were made in conjunction with the planning staff and should address both the neighbor's concerns as well as Town Farm Development's needs.

A motion was made and seconded (Chabot/ Hua) to issue a positive referral for Town Farm Development's application to modify the existing Permanent

Special Permit conditions for 152 Town Farm Road. **The motion passed unanimously.**

D. Reading of the Minutes

- a. A motion was made and seconded (Chabot /Hua) to accept the February 8, 2023 minutes. **Motion carried.**

E. Economic Developers Report

Rose reviewed the February report with Commissioners and the following items:

- a. The Spring Business Breakfast will be held on May 17th, Nathan Grube, Tournament Director for the Travelers Championship, will discuss the economic benefits of the Tournament. Northeast Surety is celebrating their 25th anniversary in Farmington, the Commissioners agreed to issue a proclamation for their anniversary.
- b. Survey responses were mostly favorable for the Winter Breakfast, some attendees continued to have issues with the sound system. Rose will bring the Town's sound system to all future breakfasts.
- c. Commissioners discussed whether we should continue the town's membership with Metro Hartford Alliance. Commissioners noted that although Farmington is an economic leader in the Hartford Region, there are advantages to being part of a larger entity, especially in terms of marketing and business attraction efforts. Commissioners asked Rose to comment on whether she sees benefits from the membership. Rose explained that the benefits are more intangible than tangible, she agreed with the Commissioners regarding the benefits of belonging to a regional organization. Consensus was reached among the Commissioners that we should continue to keep our membership active.
- d. Rose connected with Amanda Roy from the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The Greater Hartford Arts Council is the lead agency that will shepherd us through the DECD process. Rose will meet with Lisa Johnson, the Town Historian, to discuss the various cultural assets in both Unionville and Farmington.

F. Town Council Liaison Report

The Town Council was presented with a proposed Capital Improvement Program at their February 28th meeting. This plan included capital project requests from various departments totaling \$3,984,000. This budget year will be more difficult due to the state mandated revaluation, the revaluation has shifted the tax burden from commercial to residential taxpayers.

G. New Business - None noted.

H. Adjournment

- a. A motion was made and seconded (Chabot / Hua) to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 PM. **Motion Carried.**

**Respectfully Submitted,
Rose Ponte Economic Development Director
CC: Economic Development Commissioners**