

DRAFT MINUTES
BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2014 – 7:00 PM ROOM 134

Chairman Hal Kurfehs called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and established a quorum of members:

Present: Chairman H. Kurfehs, Vice Chair M. Frankel, Commissioner N. Tolmoff, Commissioner J. Fisher, Commissioner G. Dembowski

Absent: Secretary D. Matte

Also Present: E. Cole Prescott, Recording Secretary

1.) Approve Meeting Minutes for February Meeting: Vice Chair Frankel made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner Tolmoff seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

2.) EDC Website Development: The Commission discussed several mock-up proposals from Ms. Wagner for the website's homepage. Chairman Kurfehs mentioned that Brookfield has been listed as the #1 small town in Connecticut, and this fact should be well highlighted on the website.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that the contract with Ms. Wagner has been signed, and she has received her first payment. Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that there was a document created to which important items to be listed on the website were outlined in a type of hierarchical structure. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he had emailed this document to the Commission. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he had given this information to Ms. Wagner to help her start to create the homepage. He mentioned that now these items that were listed on this document have been added to the homepage examples that the Commission is reviewing tonight. Commissioner Dembowski explained that the plan was to have five main pages – 1.) open for business, 2.) Brookfield businesses, 3.) living in Brookfield, 4.) Get started, 5.) News. Commissioner Dembowski pointed out that all five of these topics have been included on the homepage examples that the Commission is reviewing tonight. Commissioner Dembowski noted that these items were derived from Mr. Tinsley's Jumpstart Program. Commissioner Dembowski also mentioned that both he and Ms. Wagner had reviewed other Economic Development websites to determine if there was anything missing from this list for Brookfield's website. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the software which Ms. Wagner is using has the option to be changed in the future.

Commissioner Dembowski noted that one of the items on the homepage to be stagnant is the business incubator. Chairman Kurfehs replied that unless the incubator is organizationally set up before the website is launched, this topic should not be included on the website. The other links that will remain consistently on the homepage are "Where is Brookfield," which will take you to a GPS map of Brookfield, as well as another link with a pdf fact sheet to be used as a primary marketing sheet to describe Brookfield. Vice Chair Frankel noted that this link seems a bit repetitive, and suggested that the Commission may want to have some helpful links, and the fact sheet should be included on the same link with the map.

Chairman Kurfehs noted that the map should show the mileage distances with limited detail to each of the major surrounding cities. Commissioner Dembowski noted that the question for this evening's meeting is what buttons does the Commission want on the homepage, based on the document that was created outlining the list of important topics. Vice Chair Frankel asked what a loyalty program is, and Commissioner Dembowski replied that this program has not yet been created, but will be soon in existence. Vice Chair Frankel stated that the links to the Chamber of Commerce or CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center) could be added as well. Chairman Kurfehs stated that the CERC is a very important link to have on the main page. Vice Chair Frankel suggested that information about the loyalty program should be added as a resource item. Chairman Kurfehs noted that one of the benefits of adding the CERC is that it offers people the opportunity to easily view available commercial properties in Brookfield. Vice Chair Frankel stated that links to other real estate resources should also be there.

Vice Chair Frankel asked who will change the website in the future, and Commissioner Dembowski replied that this has not yet been established. Vice Chair Frankel stated that she believes that the Town Center Revitalization Plan should be easily accessible on the homepage.

Chairman Kurfehs stated that an example of what should not be done is to show the picture of the Craft Center, because it is currently not open. Vice Chair Frankel mentioned that she does not like the idea of having a picture of a church on the website. Commissioner Fisher asked how signage on the buildings along Federal Road will be shown on the website, and Commissioner Dembowski replied that the words on the sign will be hazed out.

Chairman Kurfehs stated that the lead for the entire website should be the best small town in Connecticut, because this is a great lead-in to talk about the quality of life in Brookfield. Chairman Kurfehs explained that the language used in the website should support why Brookfield is the best small town. Vice Chair Frankel suggested that the Commission also have a mission statement on the website. Chairman Kurfehs stated that the quality of life in Brookfield should also be well-noted on the homepage.

Commissioner Tolmoff asked about using the dark green mentioned by Vice Chair Frankel for color on the homepage, who noted that she would like Essex green. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the sitemap background can be done in blue or in white. The blue for the site background will be removed, so the site map will be white. Commissioner Fisher deferred from discussion of this matter. Vice Chair Frankel stated that she would like to see the dark blue and the dark green. Commissioner Fisher noted what the color green symbolizes – open space, farms.

Commissioner Dembowski asked the Commission to discuss the five proposed headings for the homepage. Vice Chair Frankel replied that she does not like the five headers, and she asked what the purpose of the header is for "open for business". Chairman Kurfehs replied that he believes that this topic indicates that the town is willing to attract and aid new businesses. The tab's label sends a positive message, and Chairman Kurfehs stated that this message is inviting. Chairman Kurfehs stated that he likes this line, but there has to be some words and information to substantiate this header. The Commission decided to keep the "open for business" header name.

Vice Chair Frankel stated that the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) has nothing to do with business. Chairman Kurfehs stated that the Commission will not be able to add the entire POCD document to the website because of its size. Chairman Kurfehs stated that the plan had been done in 2002. Vice Chair Frankel stated that a link to the Zoning regulations should also be included on the website. Commissioner Dembowski replied that the Zoning regulations will be located under resources. Chairman Kurfehs stated that developers will be interested in transportation options when looking to build or move to an area.

Instead of the proposed “Brookfield Businesses” header, Vice Chair Frankel suggested that the header be labeled “Business Resources.”

The third item is entitled living in Brookfield, which encompasses community, health care, education, transportation, housing. Chairman Kurfehs suggested that “quality of life” be used for this header instead of the proposed “living in Brookfield” header. Vice Chair Frankel suggested “residing in Brookfield” be used instead of the “living in Brookfield” header. Commissioner Dembowski stated that based on his review of other Economic Development websites, “living in [town’s name]” is a popular header.

Commissioner Dembowski noted that the “Get Started” headline will have information about investment incentives, the business incubator, and resources. Chairman Kurfehs stated that business owners would like someone to tell them where to go to have their questions answered. Chairman Kurfehs stated that the Economic Development Commission should be the group to steer these people to the answers to their questions. Commissioner Fisher asked if there would be a point person to speak with. Chairman Kurfehs suggested that there be a fact sheet and a list of resources to contact for answers to questions. Vice Chair Frankel stated that oftentimes a developer would refer to the regulations in the Land Use Department to determine what could be done in an area.

Commissioner Dembowski summarized that thus far, the Commission agreed on the following headers: “open for business and “business resources”. Commissioner Dembowski also stated that the website can be designed so that some of the items can be hidden until they are ready to be displayed on the website.

The top header of the website will state “best small town in Connecticut”. Vice Chair Frankel stated that some of the catch words of the article published in *Money Magazine* could be used to help write the mission statement. Chairman Kurfehs stated that a subparagraph could note that this town is #26 in the United States. Commissioner Tolmoff stated that information about quality of life should be added to the mission statement, and “living in Brookfield” should be used as the header for this information.

The Commission took an informal vote about the preference of the title for one of the links on the homepage: “living in Brookfield” versus “quality of life.” Upon raise of hands, the Commission agreed to use the phrase “living in Brookfield” for this particular homepage header. The vote passed, with Chairman Kurfehs in favor instead of the phrase “quality of life”.

Chairman Kurfehs noted some of the programs ongoing in Danbury with the Danbury Economic Development Department. Commissioner Dembowski stated that now text needs to be written for the website for the headers that have been established for the website. Commissioner Tolmoff mentioned that the style of the website has to all match, especially if a few different people are working on pages separately.

Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that the EDC would have its own newsletter, which email list will be populated with the emails of the people who have previously signed up to receive the Four Corners newsletter. Commissioner Dembowski also mentioned that there will be a business directory on the website, where it will be available for businesses to sign up to be added to this list.

Commissioner Dembowski reviewed the language of Ms. Wagner's contract with the Commission. Ms. Wagner will do up to five hours of content writing, proofreading and editing. Commissioner Tolmoff stated that Ms. Wagner will need some sort of outline to help create this content. Commissioner Tolmoff stated that she is willing to help write some of the content.

Commissioner Dembowski explained that when the pictures roll on the homepage, some of the key words pop up with certain pictures. These words represent what is nice about Brookfield. Commissioner Dembowski suggested that Quality of Life may be added as a tag when these pictures roll through on the top of the page. Chairman Kurfehs stated that there are too many pictures on the homepage. Vice Chair Frankel asked if the Commission would like to hire a photographer, and Commissioner Dembowski replied that he had given Ms. Wagner 200 pictures to start with, and he had discussed with her which pictures to use.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that an outline or draft should be done for each topic of the headers for the website. Commissioner Fisher stated that he will work on some written content about schools. Chairman Kurfehs stated that he will work on the welcoming message for the website. Commissioner Fisher stated that the welcoming message must be brief, and Chairman Kurfehs stated that the write-up should have the most important points covered early, much like writing a newspaper article. Vice Chair Frankel stated that at the end of the paragraph there should be an option to click to learn more. Vice Chair Frankel stated that she will draft the fact sheet. Commissioner Fisher stated that demographics and incomes will also be good aspects to add to the website. Vice Chair Frankel noted that education as a topic includes private and public schools, including WestConn, and other area community colleges and universities. Commissioner Tolmoff will draft something about health care, which includes Western Connecticut Health Care, and Chairman Kurfehs also mentioned that there are some walk-in clinics in the Town.

Vice Chair Frankel suggested that Commissioner Dembowski reach out to Jonathan Chew of HVCEO (Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials). Vice Chair Frankel suggested that Commissioner Dembowski sit in on a HVCEO meeting. HVCEO is a regional planning agency, which has facts about all of the towns. Vice Chair Frankel stated that the Candlewood Lake Authority may also be a good link to add to the website, and they also may have some great pictures to include.

Commissioner Debowski thanked the Commissioners for their input, and he mentioned that he will pass along the information to Ms. Wagner. Vice Chair Frankel stated that before a decision is made, the Commission should view the site live on the computer. The Commission agreed to do some work and correspond over email because there is a full month before the next meeting.

3.) Further Discussion: There was no additional discussion at this time.

4.) Adjournment: Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 PM. Vice Chair Frankel seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled on April 15, 2014.