

Economic Improvement Commission Minutes

The Economic Improvement Commission (EIC) held a meeting on Thursday, July 16, 2015, at the Charlestown Town Hall, 4530 South County Trail, Charlestown, RI.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Frank Glista called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.
2. ROLL: Present were Chairman Frank Glista, Don Smith, Ron Russo, Donna Walsh, Craig Marr, Betty Combs, Town Council liaison, Tom Gentz and Tax Assessor, Ken Swain also attended. EIC member Janice Falcone was unable to attend.
3. APPROVE MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2015 MEETING - Craig Marr motioned to accept the minutes and Betty Combs seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Friends of Ninigret - Ron Russo reported that the FON met on July 15 and reviewed plans for the Fall Festival scheduled for September 20, 2015. The committee plans to showcase the many attributes of Ninigret Park.

5. OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(a) Business Leaders Input - Ken Swain, Tax Assessor, presented the updates spreadsheet of the data compiled from the Business Survey. The commission reviewed the data and Ken was able to provide various details to help prioritize.

Craig Marr motioned to amend the agenda to move 8. COMMUNICATIONS to be discussed next. Donna Walsh seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

(a) Town Clerk, Amy Weinreich/Advisory Opinion requested - *Exempting the First \$10,000 of Business Tangible Property from Taxation.*

After discussion, Craig Marr motioned that the EIC support the Town Council proposal for an assessment exemption in tangible taxes for business in Charlestown. Ron Russo seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

(b) Town Clerk, Amy Weinreich/Advisory Opinion requested - *Request for an Environmental Land Use Restriction (ELUR) in Ninigret Park as Proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)*

The commission discussed the ELUR proposal for Ninigret Park. The commission agreed to table the discussion pending further review.

5. OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS CONT.

(b) Town Business Map - The chairman presented the draft of the business map.

(c) Town Website - The chairman advised that the business map could be incorporated on the town website. He is also exploring the inclusion of a flow chart for the business application process.

(d) Comprehensive Plan - Jane Weidman, Interim Town Planner, reported that the draft will be complete by July 24 and ready for the Planning Commission review on August 6. Any comments or thoughts need to be sent to Jane. The Business Survey can be added to the Comprehensive Plan as an addendum. The EIC will review the relevant portion of the plan in the August meeting.

6. SPECIAL PROJECTS/ACTION ITEMS

(a) Fire Station Memorial Park - No progress.

7. NEW BUSINESS

(a) Charlestown Arts/CHARTS - The chairman met with the Charlestown Gallery owners to see if there would be an interest in developing a "HOP-ARTS" type event. Members of the commission will work to identify more local artists for this event.

(b) Eco Tourism - The commission will ask Steve McCandless, GIS Expert to work on a map showing all existing and potential areas that could be used to develop an eco-tourism interest.

9. OPEN SESSION - No comments.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT - None.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE and AGENDA ITEMS - Set for 9:00 am Thursday, August 27, 2015 at the Town Hall Planning Dept. Annex Room.

12. ADJOURNMENT: At 11:10 AM on motion by Donna Walsh seconded by Craig Marr. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Secretary, Don Smith