

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT 9-17-09

Submitted By Joseph Seacrist

- 1. Held a discussion and a potential site walk with a developer of a proposed solar power farm in the Business Park. He is interested in approximately 6 acres from which he would like to contract with an adjoining business for the use of all the power generated. He was particularly interested in the Todesco Property next to Carby and Global Steering, and planned to talk with the owner of the property last week about possible acquisition. In order to make this a viable project, the solar farm has to be on adjoining property of the potential customer for the power.**
- 2. Another offer to buy the Seeley property was submitted by the Binswanger Corporation on behalf of a client and rejected by Seeley. Seeley says the reason for rejection is that they have another offer already on the table. Binswanger's client indicated that since this was their second formal offer on the building made directly to Seeley's CFO, that they were no longer interested in buying the property. Seeley has had the current offer on the table for more than three years and apparently hasn't moved forward with it.**
- 3. A local developer has held informational meetings with P&Z concerning his potential purchase of property on the corner of Callendar and Buckingham Street. He would like to build at least one and maybe two professional office buildings in what is currently an industrial zoned area which does not allow for the construction of general office buildings without a zone change.**
- 4. Met with the owners of an upholstery shop at the corner of Davis and Main Streets who desire to purchase a property several doors away and move their business there. In addition to meeting with them privately, I attended a pre-application meeting with the Zoning Enforcement Officer to see what hurdles they might face with the P&Z commission.**
- 5. Talked with Howard Pinkus, President of the Naugatuck Railroad Company concerning his desire to expand and improve his current rail beds. He sought the support of the EDC for his efforts. After discussing the possibility with Joe McGrail, Mr. McGrail then wrote a letter of support which is attached to your information packet for this evening's meeting. Mr. Pinkus needed the letter for his application for permission to expand to the state DOT and was working on a short deadline and was very appreciative to Mr. McGrail and the EDC for their ability to reply very quickly.**

- 6. Met with the current owners of a convenience store in Watertown who are interested in purchasing a competing convenience store across the street. Helped them with possible hurdles with P&Z and walked them through the process of applying. Confirmed for them with P&Z and inland wetlands that there are no known current problems with any possible in-ground pollution surrounding gasoline tanks at the site to be purchased.**
- 7. Planning and Zoning is still considering allowing a cleaning service to occupy the space behind the current Dunkin Donuts location in Oakville. The issue has been a dearth of adequate parking under current zoning rules.**
- 8. Attended a meeting with the Town Manager, Town Attorney, Mr Lundt, Joe McGrail (came for the latter part of the meeting) and Fred Valenti of Valenti Motors concerning the denial of their application for renovation of a former walk-in health center at the corner of State Street and Straits Turnpike. Mr. Valenti as a result of the meeting decided his best alternative was to re-apply, addressing the specific reasons for the denial, which he has done.**
- 9. Also talked with Mr. Valenti concerning an additional and separate issue concerning the renovation of a current showroom and the requirement that he apply for a special permit from P&Z since the renovation would be substantial. Mr. Valenti indicated that he was facing a year-end deadline for financing of the project and wondered whether he could “fast-track” the P&Z process. I told him I think it would be very unlikely he could do so, considering the magnitude of the project, and urged that his lawyer contact Ruth Mulcahey directly.**
- 10. The owners of a wholesale nursery in town are interested in finding at least 20 acres of tillable ground in Watertown to plant a field of perennial flowers for sale at their nursery. They talked first with Chuck Frigon and he referred them to me. I was able to send the owners a spreadsheet with 16 different sites in Watertown which met his criteria. The owners were pleased that we responded to this request within 3 hours of their request.**

- 11. The CFO of Global Steering (formerly Drive-sol) left me a voice message, upset that during a discussion between Chuck Frigon, Carolyn Nadeau and me, we felt that the town had reached a reasonable and accurate number for the new assessment of his property. He felt that we should “negotiate” further and was disappointed that we had taken the position we did. He did not return subsequent voice mail messages left by me indicating that the town never negotiates a business’s taxes; we only agree to make sure our assessment is based on sound principles and is accurate, which we did.**

- 12. Met with the owner of Berco Tanks concerning his desire to purchase a three acre parcel opposite Carby Corporation in the Business Park, which currently has a non-conforming residence on the property (a blue house). He would like to store portable tanks, which he rents to businesses when they need temporary heat for construction projects. The tanks are used as fuel tanks for the projects and then are removed and returned to the property he is interested in. I indicated that I thought he might have a problem with P&Z since they have concerns about the outside storage of equipment and materials in the IR-80 zone. I suggested that he and I meet with Ruth Mulcahey for a pre-application meeting to try to identify possible P&Z concerns.**

- 13. The owner of the former Sophies property tells me that the property will open as a sports bar by the end of November, after renovations and repairs are made to the building.**