

RED HOOK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

August 28, 2008

Red Hook Town Hall – 7:30 P.M.

The meeting was convened at 7:30 P.M.

Attending: P. Frederick, B. Mitchell, D. Moat, E. Pruitt, L. Sieverding and J. Ross on behalf of the Town Board

The Minutes of June 19 meeting were approved. (No meeting having been held in July)

Moat distributed copies of two reports that he had presented to the Town Board recommending that the \$239,496 generated from the Community Preservation Act (the “Transfer Tax”) be used to minimize the outstanding obligation for the Town’s Purchase of Development Rights. The current debt of \$1,023,000 will increase to \$1,903,000 with the addition of the most recent acquisitions. Currently the debt is funded by annual, non-renewable, adjustable rate Bond Anticipation Notes plus modest (\$40,000) annual principal payments. As there is no formal program for paying down this debt it seemed prudent to use these funds for this purpose.

A discussion was then held regarding the Committee’s Mission Statement and, in particular whether the Committee’s efforts: i) Continued to be consistent with the approved objectives of the statement; ii) Were objectively developed and presented; and, iii) Whether the Committee could do more to better fulfill its mission. This discussion was prompted by a combination of events principal among which were a lengthy criticism of the Committee that appeared on the Red Hook Rooster, a local internet blog, (copies of which were distributed), individual comments that were reported back to the Chairman and recognition of the fact that there is much to be accomplished. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that:

- We should continue to develop and publish as much data as possible. In this way the community generally and the Town Board in particular would have as many hard and supportable facts as possible to help them reach appropriate decisions.
- We had been objective in our search for data and in the interpretation and presentation of our findings. It was recognized that in many instances the findings often highlight specific segments of the community and even individual situations. In such cases we should be particularly careful to be sure that our presentation and the interpretation of the data are objective and have some beneficial purpose for the community as a whole.

- Finally, notwithstanding our efforts to develop a summary of the community's strengths and weaknesses that affect its economic strength, interface with the Chamber of Commerce to develop a program for enhancing community support of local businesses and efforts to stimulate desirable commercial investment much more can and needs to be done. Moat and Pruitt will make recommendations to the Committee at its next meeting for consideration regarding this need.

Paul Fredrick reported on the status of the map that he and Dick Franklin are preparing. This presentation shows the location and extent of various types of exempt, protected and developed land. The result is that one can see clearly where 53.7% of our land (12,338 acres) is exempt from taxes or currently restricted from further development. Equally significant is the identification of the limited amount of land currently used or available for commercial tax purposes.

Ed Pruitt reported on the Chamber's meeting with local business owners that is planned at Cappuccino's on September 25th. To assist in expanding attendance beyond existing Chamber members, the EDC agreed to fund mailings to non-members. We will also take part in the program.

As there was no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:33 P.M.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 18th at 7:30 at the TOWN HALL