

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
FIRESTONE ART STUDIO AND CAFE  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Phillips, Co-Chair; Jack Sayre, Tom Deffenbaugh, Joy Dorin, and Michelle Koehler

**ALSO PRESENT:** Kyle Shiel, Senior Planner;  
April DiFalco, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce  
Emma Peterson, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Adoption of the Minutes of January 9, 2019

Mr. Phillips called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Dorin moved to approve the minutes as written, Mr. Sayre seconded and all members voted in favor.

Downtown 2020 Update

Mr. Shiel said the former Catsup & Mustard building at 623 Main Street is a future potential candidate for the Downtown Loan Program. He said it is currently under contract for purchase, but the property still needs to proceed through Probate court, with a few other items to be completed before the property is transferred to new ownership. He said the concept at this point is to convert the upper floors to market-rate residential and maintain the first floor as a restaurant. He said the property has a few challenges to address before an application is likely to come before the EDC, but he said staff wanted the commission to be aware of the status.

Report of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Ms. DiFalco said the Chamber recently held a DECD event for small business owners, a round table discussion for businesses to share concerns and issues with doing/owning a business in CT. She said the Chamber is hosting a similar event on April 15th with the East of the River Chambers of Commerce, and DECD Commissioner David Lehman. She said she is hoping to have the State's new "Manufacturing Czar," Collin Cooper also attend. The Chamber has recently signed up a number of new businesses and its 119th Annual Meeting is scheduled slated for April 30th. She said the Chamber is in the production phase of the Deskbook Directory, which will come out at the Annual Meeting.

Report of the Special Services District

Mr. Shiel said a Special Services District representative was unavailable for this meeting, but will hopefully be able to send someone to provide updates at future meetings.

Report of the Planning and Economic Development Director

Mr. Shiel said negotiations for a development agreement for the Broad Street redevelopment project are ongoing, but conversations have remained productive and positive. He said the developer is hoping to

break ground on an initial project phase sometime this construction season, but there are several intermediate steps that must be completed before construction could proceed. He said the developer is continuing to invest in engineering and design work, which indicates a level of commitment towards the project and is a positive sign.

Mr. Deffenbaugh moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Dorin seconded and all members voted in favor. The business portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:29 am.

#### Tour of Firestone Art Studio & Café

Sophia Dzialo, the owner of Firestone Art Studio and Café welcomed the commission to her business. She provided members a tour of the recently renovated facilities and answered questions from members. Mr. Sayre asked about plans for the upper floors. Ms. Dzialo said the second floor would likely become another portion of the existing business while the third floor is eventually intended to include residential units. She said business so far has been healthy, which she expects to continue as word spreads about the new location. She said she expects additional business in the Manchester location, as it has more space and can accommodate larger groups for team building events. The renovation process has been challenging at times but overall is optimistic about the project. EDC members congratulated Ms. Dzialo on the project's progress to date and wished her continued success.