



Town of Wallingford
Economic Development Commission
45 South Main Street, Room 311
Wallingford, CT 06492

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2023

**Amended and
Approved: 10/23/23**

Present: Joe Mirra, Chair
Mark Gingras, Vice Chair
Hank Baum, Commissioner
Anthony Bracale, Commissioner
Tim Ryan, Commissioner
Rob Fritz, Commissioner
Patty Powers, Alternate
Gary Fappiano, Alternate
Don Crouch, ED Specialist

Guest: Rajan Doering, resident

Absent: Jim Wolfe, Commissioner
Patricia Cymbala, Alternate

Chair Joe Mirra, called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chair Mirra led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated June 26, 2023** – Mark Gingras made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Hank Baum seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Review of Monthly Expenditure Reports – June 2023** – Expenditure report reflects the close of the FY2022-23. Capital Account balance has been carried over to the FY 2023-24 budget for the billboards with a balance of \$1,265.
4. **Discussion: Incentive Programs** – Staff Crouch gave an update on the status of the Incentive Programs. Staff worked on the Incentive Programs with the EDC Retention Incentives Committee, EDC Marketing Committee, Town Assessor and the Law Department. Agreements and applications were created for each Incentive Program. Language regarding updates to town zones are included in the new drafts. The Incentive Programs are being presented to the Town Council on September 26th. The Incentive Programs packet has been distributed to the Mayor and Town Council through the Town Clerk's office.
5. **Discussion: Historic Railroad Station Re-Use Project** - Mirra updated that the EDC, along with the Mayor has had recent meetings with a developer that has a possible plan for the historic railroad station. After a number of meetings and discussions, they agreed to bring the proposed project to Town Council. The initial presentation to Town Council is to update the

councilors on the re-use of the building, and get their feedback. Mirra will have more updates for the EDC after the Town Council September 26th meeting.

- Commissioner Ryan addressed the email received by Tammy Raccio, Board of Education that suggests BOE was not aware of the possible relocation of Adult Education due to the re-use project. Ryan, former ED Specialist, gave a background of his numerous conversations with the former Superintendent Sal Menzo, the current Superintendent Danielle Bellizzi, former Adult Education Director Sashi Govin, and had a meeting with the Adult Education staff in a workshop format. Chair Mirra stated that he has also had conversations with Danielle Bellizzi, as well as, the new Director of Adult Ed., Anthony Mangiafico. Mirra and Crouch have toured the historic railroad station with prospective developers. Crouch talked with Superintendent Bellizzi today, the conversation went well. They discussed timeframe, and Bellizzi requested that if a project were to move forward to inform her so she can prepare a relocation budget. Crouch and Mirra intend to keep Superintendent Bellizzi and Director Mangiafico updated with any progress for the re-use project. The commission concluded that communication with the Town's Superintendents (Menzo and Bellizzi) and the head of the Adult Education Program (Govin) was respectful, clear, thorough, and appreciated. The coarse letter submitted by BOE member Raccio accusing the commission of poor communication regarding the potential project was inaccurate and offensive. It is the EDC's hope that in the future, the writer or anyone who has concerns about any decisions or initiatives by the EDC, would first reach out to the commission to clarify and understand before making any commentary regarding such activities.

6. **Discussion: Sign Regulations** – Crouch informed the Commission that the Planning and Zoning staff is working to create drafts for new sign regulations. More updates to follow.
7. **Discussion: Tracy Zone (T-30)** – Mirra suggested looking into creating an incentive program for this zone. He suggested getting the Incentives Committee together with the Planning and Zoning department for a discussion. Gingras suggested having a meeting of the businesses in the area to get their feedback. He requested to add this item to the next Marketing Committee meeting. Ryan stated that there would need to be an objective, this area historically has a high occupancy rate. Fritz brought up the new electric plane taxi program that is being discussed for Meriden Markham Airport. This could be a great area for creating opportunities for ancillary businesses that support the electric taxi program.
8. **Discussion: Canva Teams** – Crouch reviewed the benefits of using Canva for the EDC digital marketing initiatives. Canva is a graphic design platform at a reasonable cost of \$300/year for five (5) licenses/users. **Gingras made a motion to allocate \$300 out of the Promotional Account for the purchase of Canva Teams. Powers seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**
9. **Discussion: EDC Committee Structure** – Crouch asked if the commission would be open to combining the Retention Incentives Committee and the Marketing Committee. The commissioners discussed the original intent of each of these committees. Ryan stated that companies are not looking for incentives as much as they used to. There was a brief discussion regarding the change to personal property tax laws for manufacturing back in 2006. Fappiano mentioned that they could always create sub-committees for specific tasks, like organizing company visits that could be held in smaller groups. Bracale asked if there are any company visit scheduled for this year. Mirra stated that staff is trying to schedule one for October. Crouch stated that once the new administration is in place the company visits will resume. **Powers made a motion to combine the Retention Incentives Committee with the Marketing Committee, going forward it will be the Marketing, Retention and Incentives Committee. Bracale seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

10. Committee Remarks

- **Marketing Committee** – Chair Gingras updated that the Marketing Committee had a special meeting on September 14, 2023 to give an update and review the presentation for the proposed project for the Historic Railroad Station Re-use Project.
 - There was a special meeting on September 21, 2023. Gingras updated that CGI Digital was scheduled for filming in September, but has been postponed due to inclement weather. New filming dates are October 10th, 11th, and 12th.
 - The committee has decided to continue the conversation about a CRM in November.
 - There was a discussion regarding an essay opportunity for Wallingford's graduating high school seniors, this discussion will continue at the November meeting.
 - Powers informed the commission of the HUBCAP Manufacturing Day event on October 13th from 10am -4:30pm. Paul Lavioe, DECD will be the guest speaker at 1:00pm. Powers requested a donation from the EDC to assist in the promotion of the event. **Bracale made a motion to allocate \$500 from our promotional account for the HUBCAP Manufacturing Day event. Fritz seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - **Next Meeting:** No meeting scheduled (Next meeting will be the Marketing, Retention and Incentives Committee)
- **Retention Incentives Committee** – Powers informed the commission that her and Crouch will be presenting the new drafts of the Incentive Programs to the Town Council on September 26th for adoption and renewal.
 - **Next Meeting:** No meeting scheduled
- **P&Z Liaison** – Baum updated that the PZC will be voting on the text changes to the Warehousing regulations and removal of the Warehousing Moratorium at their October 11th meeting. Crouch stated that there have been some revisions to the height requirements and the setbacks. He stated that the moratorium should end. Ryan asked if there were any other updates that are substantial. Crouch stated that the regulations do not allow high-cube, e-commerce warehousing in any zones. The EDC encourages that this use be allowed through special permit. Secretary Hoppes will forward the minutes from the PZC special meeting on August 29th and the updated draft of the regulations for review.
 - **Next Meeting:** No meeting scheduled

11. Staff Report/regional matters –

- DECD marketing company, Cronin & Co. is offering a Small Business Boost Fund opportunity. Wallingford is on the list of towns to promote the opportunity to their small businesses. The funding opportunity focuses on walkable areas of town and Route 5. HUBCAP is hosting a Coffee and Connections event on October 12th at 7:30am. The guest speaker will be promoting this funding opportunity.
- Project discussions on the parcel next to Sonic is on hold for now.
- Proton Beam Therapy Center project update – Applicant has applied for an extension on their Certificate of Need (CON) with the state. They are currently looking to close on their financing.

12. Chair's Remarks – Mirra suggested adding a small business section to our EDC webpage that would have links to all the CT Economic Development Organizations.

13. Other community business – none

14. **Next Meeting Date:** October 23, 2023 @ 6:30pm ~ Town Hall, Room 315

There being no further business, Patty Powers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55p.m.; Anthony Bracale seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacey Hoppes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stacey Hoppes, Secretary