



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

**Economic Development Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**April 7, 2025**

4/9/25  
 RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
 AT 11:35am  
 AND RECEIVED BY  
 Kristal Romo (UG)  
 TOWN CLERK

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**Present:** Anthony Bracale, Chair  
 Frank Apuzzo, Vice Chair  
 Carl Casper, Commissioner  
 Nick Lombardi, Commissioner  
 Austin McAnneny, Commissioner

**Absent** Rob Fritz, Commissioner  
 Gary Gonzalez, Commissioner

**Others Present:** Don Crouch, Economic Development Specialist  
 Stacie McCarthy, EDC Secretary  
 David Kooris, Executive Director – MRDA

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Bracale called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:33 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chairman Bracale led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
 (Nick Lombardi and Frank Apuzzo arrived at 6:34PM)
3. **Guest Presentation:** David Kooris, Executive Director-Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority (MRDA) introduced himself and presented an overview of the newly formed MRDA and the process for municipalities to opt into joining as a member. He explained that the MRDA is a quasi-public state agency established through legislation approved by the Connecticut General Assembly and signed by Governor Lamont that aims to help cities and towns increase housing stock and encourage them to increase density near transit stations. Mr. Kooris further explained that MRDA assistance includes helping municipalities with the development of housing growth zones that can significantly increase housing production. He explained the benefits of Wallingford becoming a member and how MRDA could help bridge funding gaps and provide technical assistance and expert resources for redevelopment projects. Mr. Kooris further explained that MRDA is not solely focused on housing but also provides long-term fiscal insights and community benefits. He noted that MRDA is overseen by a board of directors consisting of 16 members, nine of whom are appointees of bipartisan legislative leaders and the governor, and the remaining seven are ex-officio members as designated by statutes, including state commissioners, town planners, leaders of nonprofit agencies, and business owners. Mr. Kooris also clarified that MRDA funding differs from State funding, allowing for alternative financing approaches and that joining MRDA would not reduce local control but would provide the Town with critical decision-making tools, as well as technical expertise and resources. Mr. Crouch explained that Mr. Kooris plans to present at the Town Council April 22, 2025, meeting regarding Wallingford's decision to opt in to the authority. The group was in support of this initiative and agreed with the next steps. **As a result, Vice Chair Apuzzo made a motion for EDC to write a letter to the Town**

50 Council supporting Wallingford's participation in the program. Commissioner McAnney  
51 seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Crouch will draft a letter of  
52 support to the Town Council.  
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54 **4. Consent Agenda:**

- 55 • Vice Chair Apuzzo made a motion to approve the March 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes.  
56 Commissioner Lombardi seconded the motion. March 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes were  
57 unanimously approved.
- 58 • Commissioner Casper made a motion to approve the February 2025 Expenditure Report.  
59 Vice Chair Apuzzo seconded the motion. February 2025 Expenditure Report was  
60 unanimously approved.  
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62 **5. Items removed from Consent:** None  
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64 **6. Discussion: EDC Commission Development**  
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- 66 • **Missions, Goals** – Chairman Bracale shared a printed copy of other municipality's EDC  
67 mission statements that he compiled (*attached*). He explained the importance of creating a  
68 mission statement for Wallingford EDC that outlines the goals and objectives of the EDC. He  
69 asked commissioners to review the handout and return to the next meeting with ideas and  
70 suggestions for writing an updated mission statement for Wallingford EDC.
- 71 • **Strategic Planning** – Chairman Bracale explained that he would like the group to develop a  
72 strategic plan that outlines goals and objective that best serve and support the town in the  
73 coming years. Commissioner Casper suggested that the group work with a facilitator who  
74 would assist with a strategy session. Chairman Bracale suggested the group work with Dale  
75 Kroop from REX Development. The group will have further discussion regarding this topic and  
76 identify a time for the group to meet.
- 77 • **Vacancies Update** - The group had a discussion regarding the current vacancies on the  
78 commission and agreed that seeking knowledgeable candidates with diversified backgrounds is  
79 of the utmost importance. The group will send suggested candidate names to Mr. Crouch for  
80 consideration by Mayor Cervoni.  
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82 **7. Activity Update:**  
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- 84 • **Historic Railroad Station** – Mr. Crouch explained that Adult Education is currently utilizing  
85 the space. They are making plans to relocate; however, the move is not anticipated to occur  
86 until mid to late 2025. Commissioner Lombardi participated in a meeting which included  
87 Mayor Cervoni, it is his understanding that anticipated plans for the building may include a  
88 designated community space as well as a privately run business. The group plans to  
89 continue to discuss this topic further and support initiatives that best serve and support the  
90 town and the use of the building in the years to come.
- 91 • **Site Selector (Zoom Prospector)** – Chairman Bracale requested an update on the status of  
92 the Zoom Prospector software. Mr. Crouch explained that properties are being listed through  
93 the software on the town website, and he anticipates expanding the use of the software to  
94 feature smaller buildings and locations such as those in the downtown area. He plans to  
95 discuss the software and its benefits with downtown landlords as he will be participating in  
96 WCI's 'Landlord Meeting' scheduled for late April 2025.
- 97 • **Tracy** – Mr. Crouch explained that the town has reached out to and met with businesses in  
98 the area regarding blight, however, there has been no progress made regarding zoning  
99 enforcement changes since the group last discussed this topic.

- **Data Center** – Mr. Crouch provided a brief update on the data center, explaining that Planning and Zoning Commission approved a zoning text amendment that allows data centers to be developed in the Watershed Interchange (WI) District. He further explained that the next steps for the data center would be to go to the Wetlands Commission. Chairman Bracale suggested that the group research and identify the top data center companies in the US to identify opportunities for Wallingford. Commissioner Lombardi explained he potentially has a contact name at a data center and will reach out to them to make a connection with EDC.

## 8. Reports of Committees and Staff:

- Marketing & Retention

- **Wallingford Worldwide – May is World Trade Month** – Mr. Crouch discussed staff efforts to obtain the information required to identify the largest exporter in Wallingford, however they learned that such data is confidential and unavailable. Chairman Bracale explained that the EDC should plan to visit large exporters in Wallingford in recognition of their contribution to the town and community.
- **Incentive Programs/TIF District** – No update.
- **Mayor's Business Visits** – Mr. Crouch explained that staff have been working with the Mayor's Office to schedule Business Visits. To date, visits have been scheduled with Orafol Americas, Roehm America LLC, and Nel Hydrogen. Mr. Crouch and staff will continue to work with the Mayor's Office to schedule more visits as schedules permit.
- **Broker Breakfast** – Mr. Crouch explained that he is working with a local broker to schedule a 'Broker Breakfast' in the near future.

- **Planning & Zoning Liaison** – Chairman Bracale stated Vice Chair Apuzzo and Commissioners' Casper and Gonzalez to participate on the committee. Vice Chair Apuzzo and Commissioner Casper agreed. Commissioner Casper will Chair the committee. Commissioner Gonzalez was absent.

- **WCI / EDC Strategic Working Group** – Mr. Crouch explained that a group of representatives from WCI and EDC have been working together to create a strategic plan related to downtown projects, which include initiatives such as Landlord meetings and the Façade Program. He noted that he and Mayor Cervoni along with Liz Davis, Michelle McCabe, Executive Director of CT Main Street Center and Erin Barnes, President and CEO of Main Street America toured downtown recently. Also, CT Main Street chose Wallingford to be featured in an article and video for the State of CT Legislature. The group acknowledged the good work WCI is doing and Commissioner Lombardi suggested that WCI would benefit from a more collaborative working relationship with EDC. Chairman Bracale suggested that WCI could be part of future strategic planning discussions. The group agreed and Commissioner Lombardi will coordinate with WCI.
  - **Facade Program 360°** – Mr. Crouch explained that Mayor Cervoni has included an additional \$25,000 in his proposed 2025-2026 fiscal year budget for rear façade enhancements and improvements for downtown buildings. This is in addition to the current façade program. Mr. Crouch noted improving the rear facades in conjunction with the existing plan to improve the rear parking lots will create opportunities for those businesses to potentially use the renovated outdoor space for outdoor dining. Chairman Bracale suggested generating a rendering depicting improved facades to help engage building and business owners. Vice Chair Apuzzo suggested that he may know an architect whose services could be utilized. The group agreed with this initiative and plan to discuss this topic further at a future meeting.

- **Staff Report** – Mr. Crouch previously discussed many of the topics in his staff report and nothing new to report.

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**9. New Business:**

- No new business to discuss.

**10. Chair's remarks – None**

**There being no further business, Vice Chair Apuzzo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m.; Commissioner McAnney seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

Sincerely,

*Stacie McCarthy*

Stacie McCarthy, Secretary

## **Economic Development Commission: Mission Statement**

*It is the mission of the Economic Development Commission to assist the town's Economic Development Department with the communication and collaboration with businesses, community organizations, and city departments to improve workforce development, quality of life, and community with the goal of attracting and retaining people and business through sustainable means.*

**North Haven:** The North Haven Economic Development Commission fosters responsible economic growth by providing a supportive approach for the retention of existing businesses and a welcoming atmosphere for the recruitment of new businesses through programs and partnerships with local, regional and state organizations that create opportunities and stability for the residents of the Town.

**Bloomfield:** The mission of the Bloomfield Economic Development Commission (EDC) is to proactively promote and foster the Town of Bloomfield's long-term economic development health. The goal of the EDC is to increase prosperity within the Town to support a vibrant, globally competitive, and business-friendly community which promotes and strengthens the diversity, well-being, and high-quality of life for the community by creating opportunities for Bloomfield's current and future businesses and residents to prosper and grow.

**Ellington:** THE ELLINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC) IS COMMITTED TO FOSTERING A PRO-BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES A GROWING, SUSTAINABLE AND DIVERSE TAX BASE. THE EDC CONTINUOUSLY LOOKS TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BUSINESSES AND TOWN OFFICIALS. THE EDC ADOPTS POLICIES CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN'S PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND STRIVES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ELLINGTON.

**Groton:** To unify economic and community interests throughout the City of Groton by serving as a conduit between City of Groton staff and community stakeholders to plan and implement strategies that enhance the attractiveness and viability of doing business in the City of Groton.

**Durham:** Economic Development Commission is to facilitate the economic growth and revitalization of our existing businesses while attracting new retail, industrial and cultural investment that will complement the character of our community. Our goal is a diversified economic base that offers employment opportunity and a quality of life that can be enjoyed by all who live, work or visit our community.