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**Economic Development Commission
Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2021**

Present: Joe Mirra, Chair
Hank Baum, Commissioner
Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner
Mark Gingras, Vice-Chair (via telephone) *
Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
Jim Wolfe, Commissioner
Anthony Bracale, Alternate
Rob Fritz, Alternate *

Absent: Gary Fappiano, Commissioner

Others Present: Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
Lynn Wolff, Secretary
Catherine Donegan, Secretary
Kathy Lilley, Exec. Dir., WCI

Chair Joe Mirra called the regular virtual meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:31 p.m. Chair Mirra explained how the EDC would conduct the virtual meeting.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chair Mirra led the EDC in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes dated February 1, 2021** – Jim Wolfe made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Rob Fritz seconded the motion. Tim Ryan itemized some changes needed: Line 48: add “CT” after “New England”; Line 50: change “Site” to “Sales”; Line 53: change “...will we be” to... “,,we won’t be...”; Line 71: add “went” after “meeting”; Line 108: change “Park” to “Parkway”. **By a unanimous vote, the motion to accept the minutes with those revisions carried.**
3. **Review of monthly Expenditure Report** – Jim Wolfe asked if we might be able to use any current funds, either from anticipated unspent marketing funds or from the money budgeted for a Consultant, to hire a firm to study the watershed area. Tim Ryan said only a portion of the \$29,000 Promotional funds budgeted for this fiscal year will not be spent. The money for the Consultant was specifically Rob Fritz joined the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

44 allocated to study access to the two sites behind the Hilton Gardens and will expire June 30.
45 However, given marketing activity on both sites, we should let the private sector take it from here.
46 It's OK that these funds expire. Regarding potential expanded uses in the I-5 Zone, we all agree the
47 Town should hire a firm that specializes in responsible development in watershed areas. The Mayor
48 has stated that there should be action with this by the end of March.

49 Mark Gingras joined the meeting by telephone at 6:43 p.m.

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51 **4. Committee remarks**

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- **Marketing**

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- **Update on committee activities** – Mark Gingras reported that, after the last meeting with the QU Student Marketing Team (SMT), things are moving quickly. The revised EDC landing page is active and, except for a few tweaks, the Committee is pleased with the results. LinkedIn has launched and other social media channels will soon be active. Facebook is on hold pending further review. Mark said that a good database is essential for these social media campaigns and asked Commissioners to send Tim Ryan any lists that they feel might be useful. The SMT and Committee are now working on refining how to measure the success of these campaigns. As the school year comes to a close, the SMT will lose two students but feels the remaining five will be able to finish work on this marketing program. Tim added that since the last Committee meeting, Instagram and email marketing are now active. Whether or not to utilize Facebook is still under consideration. Joe also complimented the Committee on all their hard work in getting this new marketing program up and running; Mark said much of the credit should be given to the QU SMT, their Professor and Tim Ryan, as they did the majority of the work.

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- **Next meeting:** None scheduled.

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- **P&Z Liaison**

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- **Update on committee activities** – Jim Wolfe said there was nothing to report. Projects the Committee has interest in are on hold.

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- **Next meeting:** No meeting set.

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- **Retention/Incentives**

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- **Report on committee activities** – Rosemarie Preneta said the Committee cancelled the meeting scheduled for the end of February and, therefore, had nothing to report.

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- **Next meeting:** No meeting set.

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79 **5. Chair's remarks** – Joe Mirra discussed unemployment information he emailed the EDC as well as an upcoming pipeline. This pipeline, as discussed last month, will hopefully become a feeder source

80 for other planned pipelines. He asked that anyone interested in being a speaker or sponsor contact
81 him. Tim Ryan mentioned that advertising this using our new Social Media channels would be ideal
82 but we need to develop the audience. Joe said he has developed a list through HUBCAP for the
83 pipelines – maybe it could be added to the database for the new Social Media channels.

84 Joe asked Tim to lead the discussion on the 2021-22 budget. Tim said the budget meeting with
85 the Mayor is tomorrow, March 2. As the Mayor had instructed departments to submit budgets with
86 no increase; the EDC has drafted its budget accordingly. The bottom line is slightly higher because
87 it include funds to hire a part-time person for the EDC office (Tim plans to reduce his hours and the
88 remaining funds will be allocated for a new part-timer). Some of the duties currently handled by the
89 secretary and Tim, such as monthly calls regarding new/expanding/relocating businesses will be
90 assigned to the new hire; that person will also work with the Social Media portion of the new
91 marketing campaign. The part-time position was approved last year but hiring was put on hold, at
92 Tim's request, due to COVID. **Mark Gingras made a motion to accept the budget of \$119,107,**
93 **as presented; Rosemarie Preneta seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion**
94 **carried.**

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96 **6. Staff report/regional matters – February report** – Tim reviewed this staff report (*copy attached*)
97 and the following items were noted:

- 98 ➤ The Engineering and Purchasing Departments are preparing RFPs for the Simpson Court
99 and Wallace Avenue parking lot projects with the improvements scheduled to be completed
100 by late spring/early summer.
- 101 ➤ The Proton Beam Therapy Center project is progressing on schedule; the development team
102 is scheduled to meet with Building, Fire and Utilities officials in early March.
- 103 ➤ The Amazon application for a facility at 5 Research Parkway is still progressing but hasn't
104 been scheduled for another IWWC meeting yet.
- 105 ➤ CT DEEP has launched the *Client Concierge Service*, designed to help guide applicants
106 through the environmental permitting and review process. Staff reached out to DEEP and
107 DECD to extend our appreciation for this effort.
- 108 ➤ WCI has organized the 1st Annual Winter Wallingford Restaurant Week, March 4-14,
109 involving restaurants throughout Wallingford. The WCI web site has details.
- 110 ➤ A local businessman plans to develop vacant land into industrial parks along Northrop Road.
111 The Town needs to consider how traffic will be affected. The Engineering Department has
112 applied for a grant to do an engineering study of that area.
- 113 ➤ Highlighting some of the new/expanding/relocating businesses as of the end of 2020 -- HD
114 Segur Insurance, 10 Research Parkway, is a good size operation (approx. 70 employees)
115 and MRC Global is a good fit for the Town as well.

116 Regarding the businessman planning to develop along Northrop Road, Jim Wolfe said that when
117 the auto auction was considering a site in that area, they might have prepared an engineering
118 study as part of the application process. *Tim said he will look for that, either in our files or in*
119 *Engineering's files.*

120 Joe Mirra mentioned that the next "From the Desk of Joe" column will focus on the EDC
121 and its mission. He'd appreciate feedback from the Commission, once the article is published in
122 *Wallingford Magazine.*

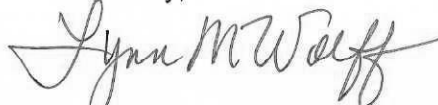
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124 **7. Other community business** – Tim Ryan thanked the secretary, who is scheduled to retire at the
125 end of this week, for all that she has done over the past 30 years which he estimated included
126 around 300 meetings. The secretary thanked everyone and said she has enjoyed working for the
127 EDC and Tim Ryan.

128 Rosemarie Preneta asked about the 7-11 proposed for the site by Sonic. Tim said the
129 application was approved by IWWC but hasn't gone through PZC yet, since that Commission is
130 waiting to hear back regarding a traffic report before considering the application. Rosemarie also
131 asked about the Wells Fargo building – any interest yet? Tim said he has had some inquiries. The
132 branch scheduled to close mid-May; after that, we wait to see how quickly they list it.

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134 **There being no further business, Jim Wolfe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 p.m.;**
135 **Patricia Cymbala seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

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Sincerely,



Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Staff Report

February 2021 Activities
Presented at March 2021 EDC meeting

Local Initiatives

- The Engineering and Purchasing Departments are preparing RFP's for the Simpson Court and Wallace Avenue parking lot projects that were previously approved by the Town Council with endorsement from the Mayor. Improvements are scheduled to be completed by late spring or early summer
- The Proton Beam Therapy Center project is progressing on schedule with their development team scheduled to meet with building, fire, and utilities officials the first week of March.
- No progress in discussions regarding expanded uses in the I-5 Zone. Per a letter sent to the PZC from the Mayor, direction is anticipated by 3/31/21.
- As of this writing, Montante Construction, on behalf of Amazon, is not on the agenda for plan review at IWWC's 3/3 meeting. The applicant is responding to comments presented in the peer review process that was requested by the IWWC. Amazon is seeking approvals to build a 219,000 sf warehouse on the former BMS site at 5 Research Parkway. They last presented to IWWC at their November 2020 meeting.

Creating Opportunities

- CT DEEP has launched the *Client Concierge Service*, a central point of contact that guides applicants through the environmental permitting and review process. Staff reached out to DECD and DEEP officials to extend our appreciation for this effort.
- CTrail representatives are actively conducting decibel level tests on the trains that travel the Hartford Line corridor in response to our complaint regarding excessive noise. Tests are currently being conducted and results are being reviewed. Corporation Council has been aggressively pursuing this initiative.
- The potential future uses of our historic railroad station have been the subject of much discussion. Per the commission's direction, staff continues to foster the requisite discussions to pursue the vision of converting the railroad station into a more robust center for economic activity.

Marketing

- A 2020-2021 marketing budget of \$29,050 was approved by the Committee for submission to the Commission for approval. This amount represents the same amount that was budgeted for the current fiscal year. We expect to be returning unspent marketing funds from this year's budget as several promotional programs were not executed due to the business environment brought on by the pandemic.
- Our LinkedIn digital channel and email marketing have been active with a variety of messages. We will now direct more focus to audience development efforts and the launch of our Instagram channel. The new landing page on our web site was well received with minor changes recommended. The College Outreach initiative, aimed at connecting our employers with college placement offices for workforce development purposes, has not yielded the expected results.

Trade Shows

- None scheduled

Update on Town Center

- Wells Fargo Bank has announced they'll be closing their 86 North Main St branch in mid-May. We anticipate that the building will be sold but are awaiting final confirmation from bank officials.
- Corner Market, at 156B Center Street, is a new market/grocery store planning to open in downtown Wallingford in early to mid-March.
- The old Jake's, 179 Center St, will be J. Carver's, a new steak and chops eatery planning to open in early to mid-March.
- The 1st Annual Winter Wallingford Restaurant Week is scheduled for March 4-14 and will involve restaurants from throughout Wallingford. Details can be found at WCI's web site.

Miscellaneous

- Regional economic development groups have been meeting virtually with recent subjects addressing the rollout of 5G Technologies and its anticipated economic development benefits and the state of the commercial real estate market.
- The Mayor addressed an audience of 170 people in the Quinnipiac Chamber's State of the Town virtual meeting that was held jointly with North Haven.
- A new round of PPP loans directly targeting small businesses has been released from the White House. There's a two-week window for applications. This program aims to fill voids left in the small business sector and expand eligibility that previous PPP programs did not allow.
- The Program Planning Secretary's position has been filled. Please join me in welcoming Catherine Donegan to our EDC team.

In the News

- *Paint & home on Route 5 expanding...*R-J, 1/30...South Broad Paint & Home Center, 1267 So. Broad St., is expanding into a vacant storefront next door.
- *Parking in Downtown Wallingford: Another Simpson Court referendum?*...R-J, 2/3...Another referendum is in the works to challenge a Town Council decision affecting public parking behind Simpson Court.
- *Wallingford Grand List: More tax revenue possible after reappraisals...* R-J, 2/05...The town's grand list has increased by 4.71 % in 2020. The resulting increase is due to the revaluation.
- *Jake's is out, but J. Carvers is in...*R-J, 2/06...Jake's, 179 Center St. closed and will be replaced by J. Carvers, a steak and chops restaurant.
- *ALONG THE LINE: Warehouses plan covers Meriden and Wallingford...*R-J, 2/9...Local businessman plans to develop vacant land into industrial parks with offices and warehouse-distribution operations along both sides of Northrop Road.
- *Local orchard partners with Stormalong Cider...*Apples from Blue Hills Orchard are being made into cider due to a new partnership with Stormalong, a craft cidery based in MA.
- *WALLINGFORD WHEELS: Electric bikes lure entrepreneur out of retirement and into new venture...*R-J, 2/15...Joseph Derhovanesian, of Bad Boyz Electro Cycles on Meadow St., is custom-making electric bikes that can travel 35-40 miles on a single charge.
- *PUBLIC PARKING IN DOWNTOWN WALLINGFORD: Organizer: Pandemic Is 'Achilles' heel' for referendum...*R-J, 2/18...Due to the COVID pandemic, a town resident is having trouble coming up with enough petition signatures for a referendum challenging a Town Council decision on public parking behind Simpson Ct.
- *STATE OF TOWN: Economic outlook is addressed...*R-J, 2/19...At the virtual Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce annual State of the Town event, town leaders of Wallingford and North Haven expressed a positive outlook for the economic future of their respective communities.

New & Expanding Businesses (Sept. through December 2020)

New

- Azteca Bakery...23 S. Colony St., C
- Century Design...95 N. Cherry St.
- East Coast Wine & Spirits...994 N. Colony Rd., A
- H. D. Segur Insurance...10 Research Pkwy.
- H & H Training and Nutrition...720 N. Main St. Ext. D
- J Class Services...60 N. Colony St.
- Lucero Design LLC...182 Quinnipiac St.
- MRC Global...15 Sterling Dr.
- New England Hops Craft Beer Bar & Grill...600 N. Colony Rd., #4
- Salon Le Rae...18 S. Orchard St., C
- The Shop Wallingford...96 Quinnipiac St.
- Taco Pacifico...97 Chapel St.

Expanded

- Next Level Installations...60 Capital Dr.
- Radiology Associates... 101 N. Plains Industrial Rd.
- Redscroll Records...69 S. Turnpike Rd., #3

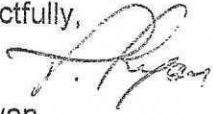
Relocated

- CT Beverage Mart... 1070 N. Colony Rd.
- The Nail Café...2 Chapel St., #5
- Ranciato & Ranciato Licensed Public Adjusters Group...300 Church St., #103

Results of EDC Marketing Activities

Advertising	0
Brokers/Site Consultants	1
Direct Contact	3
State/CERC/Chamber/REX	0
Trade Shows	0
Business Assistance	<u>0</u>
Total	4

Respectfully,



Tim Ryan