

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

June 18, 2021

TO: Members of the Economic Development Commission
FROM: Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
SUBJECT: Special Meeting Agenda – Monday, June 21, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Town Hall, Room 315
45 South Main Street
Wallingford, CT 06492

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Discussion/possible action on Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes dated June 7, 2021 (**Attach.**) (**VOTE**)
3. Discussion and possible action on proposed Data Centers
4. Other community business

Dates to Remember:
8/30 – EDC Meeting @ 6:30pm

c: William W. Dickinson, Jr., Mayor
Town Clerk's Office (for posting)

ec: EDC Members
Town Council (via T. Clerk)
Kevin Pagini, P&Z

Maribel Carrion, QCC
Ray Andrewsen, QCC
GovMedia

NH Reg., Htfd. Courant, R-J
Website
Jessica Wysocki

Individuals in need of auxiliary aids for effective communication in programs and services of the Town of Wallingford are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator at 203-294-2070 five days prior to meeting date.

EDCRVMAg062121

tel: (203) 294-2062 • fax: (203) 294-2073 • edc@wallingfordct.gov • Plugin2Wallingford.com

DRAFT

Economic Development Commission Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes June 7, 2021

Present:

Joe Mirra, Chair
Hank Baum, Commissioner
Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner
Gary Fappiano, Commissioner
Mark Gingras, Vice-Chair
Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
Jim Wolfe, Commissioner

Absent:

Anthony Bracale, Alternate
Rob Fritz, Alternate

Others Present:

Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
Stacey Hoppes, EDC Secretary
Kathy Lilley, Exec. Dir., WCI
Ginny Kozlowski, CEO - REX Development
Barbara Malmberg, Project Manager - REX Development
Ray Andrewsen, President – Quin. Chamber of Commerce
Andrew & Jenny Mays, Tankwood Rd. Resident
Dr. Ed Hohmann
Thomas Ringrose, Tankwood Rd. Resident
Caller 1 - would not identify themselves

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. **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Presentation by REX Development** – Ginny Kozlowski, CEO of REX and Barbara Malmberg, Project Manager of REX presented their power point presentation on Economic Development Strategy for the REX Development territories covering everywhere from Milford to Meriden to Madison. Their main focus right now is on resilience and rebuilding the workforce. Jim Wolfe asked if funding for Brownfields is in this coming year's budget. Ginny will forward the budget to Ryan. There was a discussion regarding the highest and best uses for sites given today's market. Ginny stated that Wallingford qualifies for distressed city funding because REX qualifies as a regional partner. During the Q&A period Barbara asked what is most important to Wallingford's Economic Development efforts. Ryan stated that Wallingford's top issues are employment (most businesses have job openings) and office space vacancies. There was a brief conversation regarding why so many people opt not to go back to work. Main reasons being receipt of unemployment benefits, childcare, skill gaps, and transportation. There was also a brief conversation regarding cyber security and what REX is doing to help protect municipalities and enhance Regional Services Grants for Municipal Systems Protection. Ryan mentioned that Wallingford is receiving \$4.3 million through the American Rescue Plan Act. It was discussed that it would be beneficial to have continuity between communities and how they distribute the funds. Ginny said there is a plan to have all 15 REX region towns come together to talk about how to

53 maximize economic opportunities with a focus towards getting the younger population to come into
54 the area and stay.
55

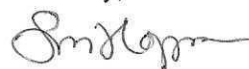
- 56 **3. Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes dated May 3, 2021** –
57 Jim Wolfe made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Mark Gingras seconded the motion.
58 By unanimous vote, the motion carried.
59
- 60 **4. Review of monthly Expenditure Report** – Jim Wolfe asked what happens to the left over funds in
61 the budget. Tim Ryan updated that we still have digital initiatives that are currently running that will
62 be paid prior to Fiscal Year end and the final payment to the QU SMT was just processed. Covid put
63 a hold on our marketing earlier in the fiscal year, so there will be a surplus.
64
- 65 **5. Discussion on proposed Data Centers** – Joe Mirra started the discussion by opening the item to
66 public Q&A. Thomas Ringrose asked about the extent of the Data Center tax incentives. At this time,
67 Tim Ryan asked to give an introduction and background of the project. Tim reviewed the project
68 specifics that are known at this time and discussed the Municipal Host Agreement that is currently
69 under negotiations. Andrew and Jenny Mays, of Tankwood Road, have concerns about the noise
70 that would be created by the facility, the position of the proposed buildings, and the traffic coming in
71 and out of the property. Thomas Ringrose brought up that instead of using diesel generators as a
72 back-up power source, they could run off natural gas to lower the noise level. Tim answered that
73 diesel generation is the most controllable back-up power source, and the only source the Data
74 Center developers will consider. This project is in the early stages and the town is taking each step
75 with due diligence. Main concerns are the noise level and the number of proposed buildings. **Jim
76 Wolfe made a motion stating: The EDC acknowledges the benefit of data center development
77 and supports the continuance of the due diligence process and negotiations of a Municipal
78 Host Agreement by Town leadership. The motion was seconded by Mark Gingras. By
79 unanimous vote, the motion was approved.**
80
- 81 **6. Discussion on Old Railroad Station** – The commission had a discussion about the building
82 including; what types of businesses would be a good fit, relocating Adult Education, the feasibility of
83 repurposing the building, and what the community is looking for. The Commission feels that at this
84 time it would be a good idea to do a feasibility and structural study. The Mayor has requested that
85 EDC work with the Engineering Department to establish parameters of a feasibility study and
86 prepare an RFP for said study. Mark Gingras stated that the Marketing Committee is willing to create
87 a draft proposal of what the feasibility study should cover, and bring it to the EDC for review and
88 discussion of how to move forward. The Marketing Committee will add it to their agenda for the next
89 meeting.
90
- 91 **7. Committee remarks**
- 92 • **Marketing**
 - 93 ➤ **Update on committee activities** – Mark Gingras updated the Commission on the
94 meeting of May 13.
 - 95 ➤ The Committee ended the QU SMT initiative for this year with a presentation by the
96 SMT to the Town Council, which was very well received. Now the Committee is
97 discussing how to move forward. What is the next step? Joe Mirra suggested
98 sending a correspondence to the SMT to get ideas from them; what would their next
99 step be if it was their corporation. Looking forward to possibly working with new
100 students, only one of the current students will be returning next year, all others are
101 graduating.
 - 102 ➤ Tim Ryan reported that the P/T Digital Marketing Specialist position is being
103 advertised through our digital channels and the Record Journal. This individual will
104 focus on our marketing direction and guide us with the next SMT team. Joe Mirra
105 suggested bringing Mark Gingras into the interview process. Hank asked if this
106 position will continue the initiatives that the SMT worked on. Tim stated that the

- 107 Economic Development Office, as a 3 person team, will continue with digital
108 initiatives.
- 109 ➤ **Next meeting:** None scheduled
- 110 • **P&Z Liaison**
- 111 ➤ **Update on committee activities** – Jim Wolfe reported that the PZC is still reviewing
112 the application for 5 Research Parkway and it will be discussed at the next meeting
113 on June 14, 2021 at 7:00pm.
- 114 ➤ **Next meeting:** None scheduled
- 115
- 116 • **Retention/Incentives**
- 117 ➤ **Report on committee activities** – Chair Gary Fappiano stated that there was no
118 meeting in May. No updates at this time.
- 119 ➤ **Next meeting:** Tentative date: June 24, 2021 Time: TBD
- 120
- 121 **8. Staff report/regional matters – April report** – Tim reviewed this staff report (*copy attached*) and
122 the following items were noted:
- 123 ➤ Staff is a member of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce Legislative
124 Committee where the ongoing workforce issues were discussed. Employers throughout
125 Town...and throughout the country... are having problems filling open positions. The
126 mantra of “Getting our Economy Started Again” is being negatively impacted by current
127 unemployment compensation practices from both the State and the Federal
128 Government. Conversations regarding the discontinuation of the unemployment stipend
129 are falling on deaf ears.
- 130 ➤ As mentioned at last month’s meeting, the CT Secretary of State’s office, in conjunction
131 with the CT Data Collaborative, has created the means for communities to identify new
132 business starts/registrations. April and May results show 61 new LLC’s registered in
133 Town. There has been a significant shift from traditional bricks and mortar to
134 homebased businesses.
- 135 ➤ Tim reported that the new Town Planner, Kevin Pagini, is ready, willing and able to
136 work with the Economic Development Department, including site visits. Interim Planner,
137 Tom Talbot is continuing to stay on staff due to the high volume of projects.
- 138 ➤ **Chair’s remarks** – The HUBCAP Small Business program has created a new data base of all high
139 school students who are not pursuing college. This list is for businesses looking to hire credible high
140 school seniors. Companies will be able to use this list to get contacts and as a Help Wanted Service
141 through the HubCap. They are also updating their Incubator that shows Wallingford students and
142 where they are now. Joe asked that members of the EDC pass along this new information. Tim
143 Ryan informed Joe that the HubCap’s Small Business Launch Promotional Flyer is in process to be
144 sent out on Instagram.
- 145 **9. Other community business** –Jim Wolfe stated that he wanted to make everyone aware of the load
146 that Tim Ryan takes on. His calls have doubled and he covers a lot of ground in his 30 hour work
147 week. Joe agreed. Tim appreciates the support.
- 148 ➤ Mark Gingras noted that it was nice to see the public attending the meeting tonight,
149 residents are the biggest asset to promote the town and hope public attendance
150 continues.
- 151 ➤ **Summer Recess** – EDC next meeting is not until Monday, August 30, 2021.
- 152

153 **There being no further business, Mark Gingras made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21**
154 **p.m.; Patricia Cymbala seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

155

156 Sincerely,

157 

158 Stacey Hoppes, Secretary

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