



Economic Development Commission

SPECIAL MEETING

Monday, January 22, 2024 | 6:30p.m.

Meeting held at Willington Town Hall, Lower Level, 40 Old Farms Rd and via Zoom

DRAFT MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Interim Chairman Matt Clark called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m. In attendance were EC members Bill Rankin, Samantha Hills, and Land Use Official Mike D'Amato.

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 25, 2023 - Minutes tabled until February 2024 Meeting

IV. Commission Business

- a. Strategic Plan: Mike D'Amato updated the EDC on the status of the Strategic Plan, which will be awarded to Strategy 5 Consultants, led by Ernie Bleinberger. The EDC discussed how the Plan would be scoped and developed, particularly regarding the input and involvement of groups like Economic Development and Planning & Zoning. It was generally agreed that PZC should be closely involved. Most other groups contacted were not as engaged. A kick-off meeting invitation should be extended to all groups, but then more targeted input and outreach would be sought that would likely be more effective. Sessions could also be piggybacked onto the later portions of standing EDC meeting agendas for invitations.

Mike D'Amato proposed that a scope could be broken out and highlighted the targeted involvement to each group so they both understood the full scope but also their desired responsibilities and it would allow the Town to keep things on track.

Sam Hills agreed that the EDC should be primarily responsible for the task organization and should have targeted input from others. The overall project should be largely completed by 2026. The kick-off meeting will therefore be a scoping/scheduling meeting. Mike D'Amato will draft an email/communication to solicit involvement from groups, including an overall project timeline.

- b. Joint PZC/EDC Meeting: Mike D'Amato suggested that this was something PZC was open to, but that perhaps it should follow the Strategic Plan. The PZC meets twice a month and has general availability to participate.
- c. Business Outreach/Interviews: Sam Hills asked if there was a formal list of businesses that were targets for outreach. Mike D'Amato will send it out again. The EDC discussed the business survey and encouraged participation on the Commission itself. There was a discussion about business owners who did not live in town and town residents with businesses in other towns.
- d. Welcome Signage: Mike D'Amato reported that the Town is still awaiting formal agreements to place the signs on the properties near the Dollar General and South Willington. If it doesn't have success contacting the property owners, the Town could confer with the DOT for placement within the State ROW.
- e. 2024 Meeting Schedule: The Commission had not yet adopted a schedule of meetings for 2024. Matt Clark noted that he could not continue chairing, and his evening availability was largely only on Monday evenings. Sam Hills suggested more regular meetings which could allow individual meetings to be shorter. The EDC suggested the 4th Mondays at 6:30 p.m. which avoided conflicts with the Board of Selectmen. Mike D'Amato will distribute a proposed schedule of meeting.
- f. Other Business: Matt Clark reported that the Vice-Chair of the Library Committee, JoAnn Taraskiewicz volunteered to be a participant at EDC. Bill Rankin provided an update on his status and potential need to reduce civic involvement. He will provide further updates.

V. Reports/Correspondence

Mike D'Amato reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission would be hearing an application for a property off of Ruby Road that would add a second tenant space to a retail building that was associated with a large ground-mounted solar array project. There was

also an available 10-acre parcel in that area that may have some commercial development applications pending.

VI. Public Participation

A member of the public clarified the difference between a Plan of Conservation & Development and the EDC Strategic Plan. There was no additional participation.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


John P. Guskowski

Economic Development Consultant