

**Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 1, 2019**

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

**Absent:**

**Others Present:** Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist  
Lynn Wolff, Secretary  
Robert DeMaio  
Edmund Hohmann

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

1. **Information/protocol on approving minutes** – At the March meeting, there was some question about who could make a motion to approve the February minutes based on Commissioners’ attendance at the meeting. After the March meeting, the secretary researched “minutes approval” in Robert’s Rules and found that any member can make a motion or vote on meeting minutes, regardless of whether or not they were present at the meeting in question. After verifying this research with the Department of Law, the secretary used the first motion made to approve the February minutes. The Chair thanked the secretary for researching this topic.
2. **Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated March 4, 2019** – Mark Gingras made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Patricia Cymbala seconded the motion. By a unanimous vote, the motion carried.
3. **Review of Monthly Expenditure Report** – Jim Wolfe asked about the balance in Promotional Expenses; Tim Ryan said most of the money is committed and that Mark Gingras would explain further during the Marketing Committee report.

44 **4. Committee Reports**45 • **Marketing –**

- 46 ➤ **Update on March 22, 2019 meeting:** Mark Gingras recapped the minutes of the March 22  
47 Committee meeting. The bulk of the promotional funds will be spent on promotional campaigns  
48 through email pushes to subscribers with the Hartford Business Journal *Morning Blend*, *HBJ*  
49 *Today*, Fairfield County Business Journal's *News at Noon* and *Biz New Haven*. The campaigns  
50 focus on lower operating costs and access to workforce while targeting data centers and R&D  
51 companies in an attempt to drive opportunity to vacant office space in our industrial parks. The  
52 Committee also discussed speaking at local community groups (to clear up inaccurate statements  
53 that have been made) and our web site. Tim Ryan explained that the Marketing Committee had

54 \*\* Rob Fritz arrived at 6:38 p.m.

55 discussed previously how to drive more people to the EDC portion of the Town's web site. Tim  
56 told the EDC that funds for 2019-20 to upgrade the Town's Content Management Software have  
57 been requested and approved by the Mayor; once the outcome of 2019-20 budget is known, the  
58 Marketing Committee will develop a strategy.

59 Mark said the Marketing Committee decided to put the Arts Council initiative on future  
60 meeting agendas and asked Rob Fritz, who has been working on this with Patricia Cymbala and  
61 others, to report on that initiative's progress. Rob said the intent of this group, which has met  
62 once, is to promote Wallingford through art (inside and outside); they will look to tie into any  
63 regional activities as well as develop items specific to our Town. Joe Mirra asked if Liz Landow is  
64 part of this group; Rob said yes, she is a very involved member. The group meets in another two  
65 weeks and plans to meet monthly thereafter. Jim Wolfe wondered if the Arts Council could use  
66 the historic railroad station as a base. Rob said that would be a great location, although the  
67 group is sensitive to the fact that Adult Education is currently located there. Perhaps the location  
68 can be shared. Tim added that bringing art outside, through the use of murals, street sculptures,  
69 etc., is a good idea. Mark said the Marketing Committee doesn't think the EDC should be a  
70 member of the Arts Council – the EDC should be only be involved in the formation. Once it's  
71 organized, the Marketing Committee will no longer have this item on their agenda.

- 72 ➤ **Next meeting:** May 3, 2019 @ 11:30 a.m.

73 • **P&Z Liaison –**

- 74 ➤ **Update on Committee activities:** Jim Wolfe reported that the Davenport Associates variance  
75 was approved by ZBA and the company will need to appear before PZC where the PZL will  
76 continue its support on behalf of the EDC. Jim asked if staff would prepare a letter of support;  
77 Tim Ryan said one will be prepared. Jim said there are a few other projects on the PZC agenda:  
78 the DiNatale project for 350 Center Street (residential occupancy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor); Walmart  
79 (grocery line pick up) and a hotel project at 1175 Barnes Road (next to Hilton Garden Inn).  
80 Members asked about the hotel project. Tim explained that the study of the property behind the

81 Hilton Garden Inn, for which the EDC has budgeted funds, went out to bid, was awarded, and  
82 then put on hold because of this potential hotel project. If the application for a hotel at 1175  
83 Barnes Road goes through, some parts of study the EDC wanted to do will be completed by the  
84 hotel developer as part of their application. As far as some of the other projects in that area, Tim  
85 reminded members that the EDC is trying to encourage adaptive re-use of properties in Town and  
86 is pleased that some recent projects, like Radiall and Davenport, were approved. Jim mentioned  
87 that a POCD meeting was cancelled but will hopefully be rescheduled shortly; Jim will continue to  
88 push for a review of open space coverage requirements in the IX and I-5 zones.

89 ➤ **Next meeting** – None scheduled.

90 • **Retention/Incentives** –

91 ➤ **Update on Committee activities:** Gary Fappiano said this Committee had hoped to meet before  
92 tonight's meeting but couldn't because of FOI restrictions. A meeting will be scheduled for the  
93 near future.

94 ➤ **Next meeting** –None scheduled.

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96 5. **Chair's remarks** – Joe Mirra said he and Mark Gingras will attend the April 8 Budget Public Hearing to  
97 answer any questions that arise. The Budget Workshop with the Town Council is scheduled for May 2; Tim  
98 Ryan, Mark and Joe plan to attend. Other EDC members can plan to attend if available. Joe invited the EDC  
99 to attend HUBCAP's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary party on April 24. Joe reported that a manufacturing pipeline for general  
100 public and veterans is scheduled to begin May 15.

101  
102 6. **Staff reports/regional matters** – Before talking about the March 2019 Activities report, Tim Ryan said he  
103 recently met with an individual who sent him a long, unhappy email about the Calare project and use of the  
104 former BMS site. Rather than reply to the email, Tim suggested a face-to-face meeting. Although Tim felt  
105 several misconceptions were cleared up, it would be impossible to meet individually with everyone who  
106 wishes to share their visions about economic development in our Town. By having EDC members speak to  
107 as many civic clubs as possible, the EDC can hopefully clear up many of the inaccurate statements that have  
108 been made. Joe Mirra added that any members should coordinate any speaking engagements through the  
109 Marketing Committee. Tim went on to highlight a few items in the March report. He added that our bonds  
110 issued in early March were assigned an Aa1 rating by Moody's Investor Services, in part due to losing BMS.  
111 Joe Mirra said we didn't lose BMS because of anything our Town did and nothing could have prevented this  
112 move; the market has changed and the Town needs to change as well. Joe said the Calare project was a  
113 good project as we should continue to try to get a viable project built in that area. Jim Wolfe reminded  
114 members that a small portion of people protested against the proposed Calare project; it would've been  
115 helpful if the other 40,000 + residents would've come out in support based on taxes. All residents are now  
116 facing a tax increase, unless another viable project is approved for that site.

117 Rosemarie Preneta wondered if we should put something in the paper that would address some of the  
 118 misconceptions. Joe Mirra said that Calare answered all questions and tried to clear up misconceptions at  
 119 the PZC meeting. He didn't feel we should put anything in the paper.

120 Tim referenced a recent Record-Journal article that said DOT does not anticipate completion of the  
 121 Center Street Bridge project until 2022. Tim met with the Mayor to express frustration about the delay. The  
 122 Mayor agreed and sent a letter to our Legislative Delegation, asking them to contact DOT and encourage a  
 123 shorter time for completion of this 34-foot bridge.

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125 7. **Dates to Remember** – The EDC was reminded about important upcoming dates.

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127 8. **Other Community Business** – No comments.

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129 **There being no further business, Patricia Cymbala made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.;**

130 **Mark Gingras seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

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132 Sincerely,

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136 Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary

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138 Attachment

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