

1
2
3
4
5
6 **Economic Development Commission**
7 **Regular Meeting Minutes**
8 **January 6, 2020**
9

10
11 **Present:** Joe Mirra, Chair
12 Jim Wolfe, Vice-Chair
13 Hank Baum, Commissioner
14 Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner
15 Gary Fappiano, Commissioner
16 Mark Gingras, Commissioner
17 Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
18 Anthony Bracale, Alternate
19 Rob Fritz, Alternate
20

21 **Absent:**

22
23 **Others Present:** Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
24 Lynn Wolff, Secretary
25 Robert DeMaio
26 Ed Hohmann
27

28 Chair Joe Mirra called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.
29

- 30 1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chair Mirra led the EDC in the Pledge of Allegiance.
31
32 2. **Election of Officers** – Jim Wolfe made a motion to nominate Joe Mirra as Chair; Mark Gingras seconded
33 the motion. By unanimous vote of the members present (Commissioner Fappiano was absent for this
34 vote), the motion carried. Jim Wolfe made a motion to nominate Mark Gingras as Vice-Chair; Patricia
35 Cymbala seconded the motion. By unanimous vote of the members present (Commissioner Fappiano
36 was absent for this vote), the motion carried. Mark Gingras and the EDC thanked Jim Wolfe for doing a
37 wonderful job as Vice-Chair; all were pleased Jim will remain as a Commissioner.
38
39 3. **Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated November 4, 2019** – Mark Gingras
40 made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Jim Wolfe seconded the motion. By a unanimous
41 vote of members present (Commissioner Fappiano was absent for this vote), the motion carried.
42
43 4. **Review of monthly Expenditure Report** – There were no comments on the November report.
44
45

46 **5. Committee remarks**

47 • Marketing

48 ➤ Report on Nov. and Dec. meetings – Mark Gingras reviewed the minutes for the last two
49 Marketing meetings. Items highlighted: The Committee has been working on developing a
50 trivia game about Wallingford businesses for use during the Wallingford 350th Jubilee

51 Gary Fappiano arrived at 6:34 p.m.

52 Celebration in June. It is being developed (with technical help from the BOE) as an electronic
53 *Made in Wallingford* trivia game that challenges residents to test their knowledge of Wallingford
54 companies by answering 10, 20 or 30 questions. The Committee is looking to have a version
55 featured in *Wallingford Magazine*, in local restaurants and bars as part of their Trivia Nights, in
56 the Public Library and elsewhere if possible.

57 The Committee also worked on the Resources for Manufacturing Forum to be held January
58 28 at BYK. Tim Ryan asked members who plan to attend to contact the office so that
59 reservations can be made.

60 The Committee continues working to self-promote the Commission. Joe Mirra noticed that,
61 especially during elections, a lot of uninformed comments were made; he said the EDC needs
62 to find ways to make sure Wallingford residents are informed about Town issues. EDC
63 members needs to make more public appearances. A set of “Talking Points”, which members
64 can use when speaking to local groups, have already been developed and are on the web site.
65 Patricia Cymbala said these “Talking Points” need to be periodically reviewed and revised so
66 the points stay current.

67 Billboards were also discussed -- electronic billboards outside our borders as well as
68 additional billboards within our Town. The Committee feels electronic billboards are still too
69 expensive and feels our marketing dollars are better spent on other initiatives. Regarding
70 additional billboards, advertising somewhere on the former Brothers lot was suggested. Mark
71 wondered if we could angle the existing I-91 South billboard so that traffic traveling north and
72 south can see the sign. Patricia Cymbala wondered if the Town could advertise at other town’s
73 railroad stations.

74 Anthony Bracale suggested looking into LinkedIn GeoFencing which LinkedIn says,
75 “allows businesses to access mobile device user’s WiFi/cell data/GPS to trigger push
76 notifications, text messages, alerts, and even targeted advertisements, to deliver location-
77 based marketing data.” Anthony says this might be a very effective way to market the
78 Town; the Committee will consider this idea. The Committee is also looking at changing
79 the message on the existing billboards.

80 Next meeting: January 29 at 8:30 a.m.

81 • P&Z Liaison

82 ➤ Update on committee activities – Jim Wolfe said he hopes the PZC will schedule a workshop in
83 early February to talk about the IX and I-5 zones. PZL members are following an application for

84 988 East Center Street. Tim Ryan explained that the applicant is using the site to offload
85 concrete-quality sand. The applicant hopes to get PZC approval in January after previously
86 agreeing, by IWWC mandate, to plant around 160 bushes in the spring when the ground thaws.
87 The applicant also agreed to only accept deliveries from northbound trains with the sand
88 contained in the last 3 train cars; this will expedite the delivery time and not block East Center
89 Street. Joe Mirra commented that when the sand is brought in by train, truck traffic through
90 Wallingford is reduced. **Jim Wolfe made a motion to support the application for 988 East**
91 **Center Street; Mark Gingras seconded the motion. By a unanimous vote, the motion**
92 **carried.**

93 • Retention/Incentives –

- 94 ➤ Report on November 27 meeting – Gary Fappiano said Committee members have begun
95 calling companies that appeared on a culled disconnect list from the Electric Division; members
96 had some success despite the holidays. Gary found that one company, in fact, is still in Town –
97 they relocated.

98 Proton Beam Therapy Center was discussed. The Committee wants the public to know,
99 despite some speculation to the contrary, that the company will pay both personal and real
100 estate taxes. Also, Proton Beam Therapy Center might be eligible for a tax incentive program,
101 should the owners choose to apply.

102 The next meeting is scheduled for January 23 at 9:30 a.m.

- 103
104 6. **Chair's remarks** – Joe Mirra discussed upcoming pipelines and the need to keep them going. It is also
105 important, when organizing these pipelines, to continue working with our schools so appropriate curriculum can
106 be offered to high school students.

107 Gary Fappiano said that the Department of Labor seems to encourage people to go on unemployment,
108 rather than utilizing some of the resources the State offers, like these pipelines. Joe Mirra agreed, saying that,
109 due to privacy laws, Workforce Alliance (which works to match people with jobs) isn't allowed to access DOL
110 information on unemployed workers. He feels this is something that needs to be fixed legislatively.

- 111
112 7. **Staff report/regional matters – November and December** – Tim Ryan highlighted a few items from these
113 two staff reports:

114 The former Bristol-Myers Squibb building is completely down. Calare should be commended for
115 completing this, it should be noted, within the strict guidelines of the Town and without any violations. Tim said
116 there are two active discussions concerning this 180-acre site.

117 The revised draft of the Pedestrian Connectivity Improvement Study, which focuses on improved physical
118 and visual elements for walkability between the Town Center and the new train platform, should be released in
119 mid-January. Undergrounding of the power lines is still considered to be key.

120 Staff met with Peter Denious, the new CEO of the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), to
121 discuss Wallingford strengths and the business challenges we face as a State.

122 Staff and the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce met with R. Adam Norwitt, CEO of Amphenol to
123 discuss doing business in CT and his role as a volunteer board member of CERC. Wallingford is proud to have
124 the World Headquarters of Amphenol located in our Town.

125 The new owners of 4 Center/35 North Colony Streets shared with Town officials their vision to revive this
126 prominent building in our Town Center and plan to renovate the outside of the building first.

127 Some complications delayed the sale of 100 Center Street; closing is scheduled for mid-January.

128 The EDC Chair, WCI Executive Director, the Town Planner and Staff plan to meet to discuss leasing
129 challenges in our Town Center. A few business owners have expressed frustration over their inability, under
130 current regulations, to put offices on the first floor. How does a town keep it's Town Center vibrant yet not
131 handicap business owners? Could this be achieved by allowing a small percentage of 1st floor units to be office
132 space versus retail? It might be beneficial to see how other towns with successful Town Centers have dealt
133 with this issue. Members cautioned that what might work in one town might not work here in Wallingford but
134 speculated that a good mix of uses might be key.

135 Regarding the Town Center, Jim Wolfe said he feels the historic railroad station is underutilized –
136 something big in that location, like a cultural center or restaurant, would be beneficial to that area of Town, Rob
137 Fritz agreed a cultural center would be a big draw, which fits with what the Arts and Cultural Commission would
138 like to see in Town. Rob invited anyone with interest in the Arts and Cultural Commission to attend an open
139 community meeting on January 21 at 6:30 at the Public Library.

140 Rob also mentioned that Fox TV, which does weekly highlights about CT towns, recently featured the
141 Wallingford restaurant *Alchemy* as well as a few other Town locations. He urged members to give this eatery a
142 try.

- 143
- 144 **8. Dates to Remember** – The Mayor's State of the Town will be held on January 30 and the EDC will again host
145 businesses from our Town. Commissioners should contact the Economic Development office if they plan to
146 attend (Mark Gingras, Hank Baum and Rob Fritz told the secretary they plan to attend,) Tim Ryan said there is
147 room to invite a few more companies – call the office with suggestions.

- 148
- 149 **9. Other community business** – Joe Mirra asked members to stay after the meeting so a group photo can be
150 taken.

151

152 **There being no further business, Mark Gingras a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.; Rosemarie**
153 **Preneta seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

154
155 Sincerely,

156
157
158 Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary
159
160