



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

Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2021

Approved: August 30, 2021

Present:

Joe Mirra, Chair
Hank Baum, Commissioner
Gary Fappiano, Commissioner
Mark Gingras, Vice-Chair
Jim Wolfe, Commissioner
Anthony Bracale, Alternate
Rob Fritz, Alternate

Absent:

Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner

Others Present:

Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
Stacey Hoppes, EDC Secretary
Andrew & Jenny Mays, Tankwood Rd. Resident
Ed Hohmann, Resident

Chair Joe Mirra called a special meeting of the Economic Development Commission to discuss a single agenda item. The Commission does not meet in July, so a special meeting was necessary due to the time sensitivity of the subject. Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

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 June 7, 2021** – Jim Wolfe made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Anthony Bracale seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.
3. **Discussion and Possible Action on proposed Data Centers** – Chair Mirra asked Tim Ryan to introduce the Data Center project to the Commission. Ryan gave an overview of the project stating details and giving a timeline of the project. The project started in August 2019 with confidential discussions on site selection, as is very customary with many projects. The project has been open to public discussion since earlier this year.
 - Ryan addressed the question, Why Data Centers... Wallingford has been trying to attract Data Centers unsuccessfully for some time now. Costs to have a Data Center in Connecticut are recognized by the industry as being too high. Recent Connecticut state legislation exempted large Data Centers (\$200MM minimum investment) as tax exempt. In lieu of taxes, each town can have a Qualified Data Center Municipal Host Fee Agreement.
 - Ryan then addressed the question, Why Wallingford... Currently there are high-speed data lines running down the I-91 corridor connecting Boston to New York. Wallingford is a prime location for Data Centers to access and build out that pathway. Ryan stated that the POCD encourages modernizing our development profiles. Data Center development is in lock-step with the purpose statements of the I-5 and IX Zones recommendations.

- Attendees gathered around a map of the privately owned properties that are currently being assembled by Gotspace, LLC. The map is highlighted by property, with acreage and owner identification. Multiple sites are under contract with several private property owners, totaling 500+ acres. Most of the discussion was regarding the property being assembled in Barnes Industrial Park North, bordered by Tankwood Road and North Farms Road.
 - Main concerns of the EDC and the public are sound and traffic patterns. Ryan stated that through ongoing negotiations lead by the towns Law Department, the building setbacks increased from 100 ft. to 350 ft. Ryan stated that traffic patterns are exclusive to the Industrial Park. There will be no access to the project via Tankwood Road or North Farms Road. Ryan shared that sound mitigation strategies recommended by the sound consultant hired by the town are now are part of the agreement. These strategies are the toughest sound requirements in the country according to the developer. The Agreement is on the agenda for the Town Council meeting on June 22, 2021.
 - When asked if this was a good financial deal for Wallingford, Ryan responded by saying, although these hyper-scale Data Centers are potentially tax exempt the revenue received from the Host Agreement is a multiple of what we are receiving in our industrial parks in taxes per acre. For example, the Barnes Industrial Parks currently yield a total of \$8,900/acre in Real Estate and Personal Property taxes. Data Center Development as proposed will yield, via the Host Agreement \$23,400/acre.
 - **The Commission stated that they are unanimously in support of the Data Center Development Project, and in lieu of a motion the EDC requested that Staff, Ryan write a letter to the Town Council. (Attached)**
4. **Other community business** – Joe Mirra informed the Commission that Hank Baum will now be the Chair of the Planning & Zoning Liaison Committee.
- Jim Wolfe informed Mark Gingras about the plot of town owned land on Grieb Rd. that has a water pumping station with electricity that abuts I-91 that we could possibly look into for adding power to the EDC billboard.

There being no further business, Jim Wolfe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m.; Anthony Bracale seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Sincerely,



Stacey Hoppes, Secretary