

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

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2021

Not Approved by EDC

Present:

Joe Mirra, Chair
Mark Gingras, Vice-Chair
Gary Fappiano, Commissioner
Hank Baum, Commissioner
Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner
Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
Rob Fritz, Alternate

Absent:

Jim Wolfe, Commissioner
Anthony Bracale, Alternate

Others Present:

Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
Stacey Hoppes, EDC Secretary
Dr. Hohman, Wallingford resident

Chair Joe Mirra called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission 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 Meeting Minutes dated November 1, 2021** – **Mark Gingras made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Hank Baum seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.**
3. **Review of Monthly Expenditure Report** - Being there were no comments regarding the Expenditure Report, Chair Mirra moved onto the next item on the Agenda.
4. **Discussion on 2022 EDC Yearly Meeting Schedule** – The Commission had a brief discussion regarding changing the date of the February 7th meeting. **Mark Gingras made a motion to change the meeting dated Monday, February 7, 2022 to the previous Monday, January 31, 2022. Hank Baum seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously. Annual calendar approved.**
5. **Committee Remarks**
 - **Marketing** – Chair Gingras stated that they did not have a meeting this past month.
 - Continue to gather information on a pathway to bring commercial vitality to the Old Railroad Station. Preliminary tours have taken place in preparation for a formal RFP to do needed renovations to make the building leasable to TBD prospective tenants.
 - Secretary Hoppes gave an update on the Digital Channels for the month of November. There were 6 initiatives sent out through LinkedIn and Mail Chimp, and 2 initiatives sent out through Instagram. Staff will continue to create weekly initiatives for all digital channels. Staff is working to begin providing analytics for our digital

53 channels in January, and we are beginning to focus on monitoring and growing our
54 audiences in each of these 3 digital channels as well.

- 55 • Next meeting: No meeting scheduled at this time...within the next 6 weeks

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57 ➤ **Planning & Zoning Liaison** – Baum stated that the PZC has continued the agenda item on
58 the proposed Text Amendment to allow data centers in the IX and I-5 Zones to their January
59 meeting. No further updates on the reconfiguration of the IX and I-5 Zones with respect to the
60 watershed protection area.

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62 ➤ **Retention/Incentives** – Rosemarie Preneta stated that the committee did not have a
63 meeting last month; there are no updates at this time.

- 64 • Next meeting: Possible meeting in January 2022

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66 **6. Staff Report** – Staff Ryan gave an update of Activities from October 2021.

67 ➤ Proton Therapy Center proposed for Northrop Rd: see staff report

- 68 • Additional discussions:

- 69 ○ Ryan added that this is a state of the art cancer treatment facility that will be
70 centrally located here in Wallingford on Northrop Road, and it is a fully taxable
71 event...this is a great project for the EDC, Wallingford, and patients
72 throughout Connecticut that will no longer have to travel out of state for
73 treatment.

- 74 ○ Rosemarie Preneta asked if the property has already been purchased by
75 YNH Systems/HHC...Ryan stated that the property has been purchased.

76 ➤ Data Center text amendment discussion has been moved to the PZC's January agenda: see
77 staff report

- 78 • Additional discussions:

- 79 ○ The proposed text amendment to allow data centers in our IX and I-5 zones
80 will be on the agenda of the PZC January 10, 2022 meeting, staff encouraged
81 all EDC commissioners to attend if possible. Secretary will forward the
82 proposed text amendment to the EDC prior to the meeting for review.
83 Secretary will also forward the PZC agenda to all EDC commissioners once
84 received.

85 ➤ We are told that GotSpace LLC, proposers of large scale data center projects, is dealing with
86 internal issues within its operating structure. We remain confident in the marketability of data
87 center development opportunities in our Town and thus continue to support the necessary
88 zoning text amendment to allow data centers in the IX and I5 zones.

- 89 ○ Multiple Commissioners reiterated the importance of making sure people are
90 aware that the data center text amendment allows data center development
91 via Special Permit, in the IX and I-5 Zones. These regulations are **not** specific
92 to the GotSpace, LLC application. This Special Permit would include special
93 requirements for each application.

- 94 ○ Town Planner, Kevin Pagini has done a great deal of research on data center
95 development projects while preparing the text amendment.

- 96 ○ Rob Fritz and Ryan had a brief discussion about what is currently allowed in
97 these zones and how those business types are categorized. Ryan stated that
98 data centers are not allowed in this zone currently simply because no one
99 added it when the industrial zone was originally created. It is the EDC's priority
100 to modernize, diversify, add to, and grow the grand list, and data centers do all
101 four.

- 102 ○ Resident, Dr. Hohman asked if the Town would be willing to put a conference
103 center in Wallingford. Rob Fritz mentioned that there would need to be a
104 market for a conference center. Dr. Hohman stated that if the Proton Therapy

- 105 Center is approved, that they might need a conference space. Ryan stated
106 that he welcomes the opportunity to speak with any interested parties.
- 107 ➤ ARPA funds... The Town Council will soon be asked to approve UHY Advisors as our
108 consultants for oversight of the ARPA process. The EDC will continue to request prioritization
109 of funds for business assistance. We fully expect to be an active member of whatever formal
110 structure is set up to manage applications and disseminate funds
 - 111 ○ Questionable uses of ARPA funds are showing up in multiple towns/cities in
112 the state and Wallingford wants to do it right, no misgiving or bias. Looking to
113 have an application form in the first quarter of 2022.
 - 114 ➤ Staff met with the Town Planner and developers: see staff report
 - 115 ● Continued collaborations within town departments; especially the Town Planner, is
116 greatly appreciated
 - 117 ○ Hank Baum mentioned that he ran into a new business owner in town, the
118 owner was very pleased with the help and guidance he received from the
119 EDC, the Town Planner and all other departments.
 - 120 ○ Ryan reiterated that he is always willing to meet with any businesses,
121 individuals, or groups that are looking to do business in Wallingford.
 - 122 ➤ Staff met with management of Simplex Operations regarding their recent purchase of 5
123 Technology Drive (former home of Phillips Respironics). This new site represents a large
124 expansion and will be the Northeast Center of Excellence for this Life Sciences Company.
125 They will move their operations from their present site in Barnes Park South sometime in the
126 first half of 2022
 - 127 ➤ Awaiting an appraisal:
 - 128 ● The EDC supports the sale of the small dormant parcel of Town owned land behind
129 Center St Brewing Company at 25 Wallace Ave...work in progress
 - 130 ➤ The EDC was represented at the Big Connect in New Haven. This business development
131 show was sponsored by the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce. Special thanks to
132 Commissioners Mirra, Gingras, Baum, Preneta and Fritz for helping to staff our booth and
133 engaging in conversations about our Town and its many attributes
 - 134 ➤ Ryan addressed the labor shortage concerns within town and the state.
 - 135 ● Ryan attended the Hartford State of Economic Development Conference this month.
136 One of the questions asked was; what can we do to get people back to work? After a
137 brief discussion it appears that people are getting incentives to not work. Multiple
138 commissioners stated that one issue is the lack of follow up with the Department of
139 Labor. Applicants will apply, send in their resume, show up for an interview and then
140 "ghost them" (not show up for additional interviews). Ryan stressed that it is a priority
141 to mobilize the workforce.
 - 142 ● Mark Gingras asked if this conversation is happening at the state level. Ryan stated
143 that he has made it a priority when speaking with Economic Developers and
144 Legislators.
 - 145 ● Ryan shared that the Unemployment Trust Fund is underfunded in spite of the state
146 using ARPA funds to shore it up. Businesses pay into this fund. There is an ugly irony
147 that could occur if businesses are required to pay an added assessment to the
148 Unemployment Trust Fund even though they have multiple job openings.

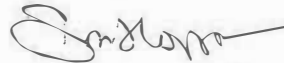
- 150 **7. Chair's remarks** – Chair Mirra informed the commission of the newest updates from the HubCap.
- 151 ➤ January 12, 2022 - HubCap will be hosting a Panel Discussion for parents of high school
152 students to learn about the employment pipeline opportunities for their children offered at the
153 HubCap.
 - 154 ➤ HubCap is creating a Small Business Unit to help small businesses in town. This will include
155 a Pop-up Store for small businesses, including out-of-home businesses at the HubCap every
156 2nd Tuesday of the month.
 - 157 ➤ HubCap is also working to create a Dental Pipeline option.

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8. Other community business – None

There being no further business, Mark Gingras made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.; Patricia Cymbala seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Sincerely,



Stacey Hoppes, Secretary