

**Economic Development Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
November 2, 2020**

**Present:** Mark Gingras, Vice-Chair  
Hank Baum, Commissioner  
Gary Fappiano, Commissioner  
Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner  
Jim Wolfe, Commissioner – Attended via telephone  
Anthony Bracale, Alternate/Voting Member  
Rob Fritz, Alternate/Voting Member

**Absent:** Joe Mirra, Chair  
Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner

**Others Present:** Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist  
Lynn Wolff, Secretary  
Kathy Lilley, Exec. Dir., WCI

Vice-Chair Mark Gingras called the special meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:31 p.m. at HUBCAP and asked Alternates Bracale and Fritz to serve as voting members.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Vice-Chair Mark Gingras led the EDC in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated October 5, 2020** – Jim Wolfe made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Rob Fritz seconded the motion. Hank Baum noted that the answer to last month's question about how promotional funds were spent to date was answered within these minutes. **By a unanimous vote, the motion carried.**
3. **Review of monthly Expenditure Report** – Report not available
4. **Committee remarks**
  - **Marketing**
    - **Update on October 19 and November 2 meetings** – Rob Fritz briefed the Commission about the meetings with the Quinnipiac University students and their Professor. The students are working with the Marketing Committee and staff to build, manage and drive a

digital campaign aimed at businesses inside and outside CT. The Student Marketing Teams reported on the topics of Competitive Analysis, Brand Analysis and SEO Research. After discussing the report, they were given their new assignments, which will be discussed at the next Committee meeting. The Committee hopes to have a strategy in place by the end of the month. The Committee members continue to be pleased with the QU students' work. The EDC discussed specific aspects of the campaign with the Committee members and Staff and offered some suggestions. Mark Gingras said that the challenge is to develop a broader plan that will last long after we are gone.

➤ **Next meeting:** November 16 at 8 a.m.

- **P&Z Liaison**

➤ **Update on committee activities** – Jim Wolfe asked Tim Ryan to brief the EDC about an application submitted to IWWC for 5 Research Parkway. Tim said the applicant, Montante Construction, is proposing to build a 219,000 sf warehouse/distribution center at 5 Research Parkway. Members discussed the pros and cons of this project. Jim said he plans to attend the virtual IWWC public hearing on November 10. Tim also reported on two items that will be discussed at the November 9 PZC meeting -- outdoor dining and the IX and I-5 Zone changes which Tim feels are important topics.

➤ **Next meeting:** No date set.

- **Retention/Incentives**

➤ **Report on October 29 meeting** – Gary Fappiano said Tim Ryan attended the October 27, 2020 Town Council meeting at which the EDC requested renewal of three tax incentive programs that expired at the end of September. The Town Council voted to renew all three programs. The Committee also discussed the IHZ Tax Incentive, due to expire at the end of December. The Committee will continue discussing this incentive at its next meeting as they consider some possible changes, including whether to increase the incentive, expand the boundaries, etc. Tim Ryan was asked to attend the WCI November Board of Directors meeting to talk about the Town Center and how it has been affected by COVID.

➤ **Next meeting:** November 24 at 9 a.m., location to be determined.

**5. Discussion and possible action on draft Meeting Schedule for 2021 – Jim Wolfe made a motion to accept the Meeting Schedule for 2021, including August 30 as a meeting date (due to the Labor Day holiday); Gary Fappiano seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion was approved.**

**6. Chair's remarks –**

- **Discussion regarding railroad noise issues** – Jim Wolfe reviewed his report concerning train horn noise at certain railroad crossings (*see copy attached to October Staff Report*). One problem

seems to be that the engineers blow their horns at both crossings by the Historic Railroad Station. He feels if the railroad would treat the Hall Avenue and Quinnipiac Street crossings as one crossing that would greatly cut down on the noise. Another suggestion might be to consider creating a Quiet Zone. Mark Gingras suggested we ask the Corporation Counsel to write a letter to the railroad and request cutting down on the frequency of the horns by the Historic Railroad Station. Jim Wolfe wondered if we should also check the decibel level because the horns seem overly loud. Kathy Lilley said there is a free app called "Sound Level" that measures decibel levels; Jim will look into this. The EDC also asked Tim Ryan to contact Meriden to see what they've done about train noise. **Rob Fritz made a motion that the Corporation Counsel be asked to prepare a letter, with input from Tim Ryan, to the railroad about reducing train horn noise; Anthony Bracale seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion passed.**

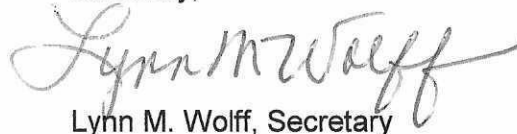
7. **Staff report/regional matters – October report** – Tim reviewed this staff report (*copy attached*). While many items in his report had already been discussed, the following items were noted:

- CT DECD announced the \$50 million CT Cares Small Business Grant Program which awards up to \$5,000 to small businesses. Information about this grant will be emailed to the WCI and HUBCAP email lists;
- Philips Respironics announced another wave of lay-offs at their 5 Technology Drive facility. This news is part of their 1+ year plan to vacate the facility by June of next year;
- 7-Eleven is considering opening a store next to Sonic on Route 5

8. **Other community business** – Tim Ryan thanked the secretary for working from home to get several important items done.

**There being no further business, Gary Fappiano made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.; Rosemarie Preneta seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

Sincerely,



Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

### **Staff Report**

October 2020 Activities  
Presented at November EDC meeting

#### **Local Initiatives**

- Montante Construction has submitted an application to IWWC for a 219,000 sf warehouse use at 5 Research Parkway, former BMS site. A public hearing on the application is scheduled for Tuesday 11/10
- The DPW has graciously agreed to allow the Simpson Court concrete barriers to remain in place until 11/2. Any snow removal and/or ice control within the barriers will be the responsibility of the businesses served by the barriers until their removal.
- Town Councilor Chris Shortell has initiated conversation regarding the continuation of expanded outdoor dining and food trucks in a post-COVID environment. The fundamental premise is that outdoor dining and food trucks at our wineries have been positively received by our businesses and their patrons alike. Our present zoning regulations, in most cases, do not allow for such uses but they are allowed under a COVID-era Executive Order from the Governor. Discussions are underway to determine the mechanics of allowing these experiences to continue after the Governor's Executive Order is lifted

#### **Creating Opportunities**

- The CT DECD has announced the \$50MM CT Cares Small Business Grant Program. Grant maximum is \$5,000 per small business and monies will be distributed in late December. WCI and HUBCAP will email details to their email lists. *More details shared during my verbal report*
- An unwelcomed byproduct of the new CT rail train schedule (from 6 to 17 trains per day) has been numerous noise complaints regarding the decibel level and frequency of train horns. At the request of EDC staff, Commissioner Wolfe surveyed north and southbound train horns at the Quinnipiac St and Hall Ave crossings...report attached. We remain grateful for the opportunity the enhanced train schedule provides to Transit Oriented Development opportunities but are convinced that the egregious noise issues will discourage development projects
- Staff is meeting with a group of NY commercial real estate investors to tour our industrial parks and identify investment opportunities

#### **Marketing**

- The digital marketing initiative program is underway. A team of seven Quinnipiac University (QU) students have been selected to work with us along with a QU professor. The plan is to determine the feasibility of a digital marketing campaign before the end of November

#### **Trade Shows**

- None scheduled

#### **Update on Town Center**

- Staff and EDC Chair will attend a WCI board meeting to brainstorm about ways we can assist Town Center businesses that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Our concerns for many small businesses runs high

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Philips Respironics has submitted a required WARN notice to the State DOL announcing another wave of layoffs at their facility at 5 Technology Drive. They expect to complete their 1+ year wind-down and vacate the facility by 6/30/21
- Staff was the guest presenter at the Wallingford Rotary Club where a variety of local projects were discussed and several issues of misinformation were clarified

#### **In the News**

- *Owner of 100 Center wants regs changed...RJ, 10/6...Chiropractor Tracy Molton, attempts to change zoning regulations to allow her business to occupy the first floor*
- *New plan proposed for former BMS site...RJ, 10/8...219k sf warehouse proposed for 5 Research Parkway*

- *7-Eleven looking to open next to Sonic...*RJ, 10/15...IWWC received an application from a Boston based engineering firm
- *Downtown wellness center talks continue...*RJ, 10/16...Healing Hands Chiropractic attempting to relocate to 100 Center St
- *Parking requirements may be eased...*RJ, 10/21...an effort to allow outdoor dining post-COVID
- *Gaylord launches research center...*RJ, 10/22...The Milne Institute will aim to shape the way millions of Americans receive rehabilitative medicine
- *New round of layoffs at Wallingford med-tech firm...*HBJ, 10/22...Philips Respironics will lay off 32 more workers by 12/18 as their strategic wind-down continues
- **New & Expanding Businesses**

New

Relocated

**Results of EDC Marketing Activities**

Advertising	0
Brokers/Site Consultants	0
Direct Contact	6
State/CERC/Chamber/REX	0
Trade Shows	0
Business Assistance	<u>0</u>
Total	6

Respectfully,

Tim Ryan

September 21, 2020

To: Tim Ryan

From: Jim Wolfe

Subject: Train Horns

Per your request I have conducted a survey regarding the train horns at the crossings located in Wallingford. (see attachment page 2) I also checked the regulations to see what the requirements are for engineers to sound their horns when approaching a railroad crossing. (see page 3 attached)

While researching the regulations for the train engineers to sound their horns I also found an application for a railroad quiet zone. (see attachment page 4)

While conducting my survey I realized that the train engineers were doubling the required blast on their horns while coming through the old station area, realizing that old station area is actually two railroad crossings. Although it seems excessive the trains are actually traveling across two crossings and doubling up on their horn blasts. I measured the distance between Hall Avenue and Quinnipiac Street and found it to be 188 feet. At best I would recommend that the railroad would consider the two railroad crossings at the old station be considered as one.

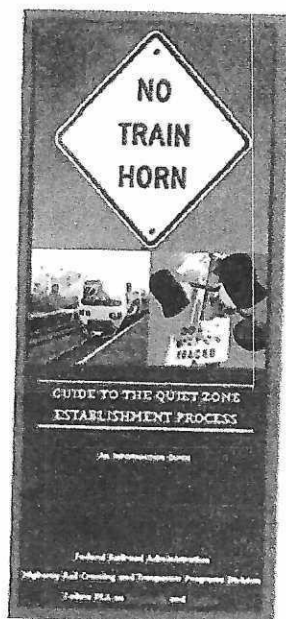
Survey as follows:

Date	Time	Location	Horn Sounding	Direction
9/11/20	3:41 pm	old station	2 long 1 short 3long	north
9/11/20	3:47 pm	new station (Stopped)	5 long	south
9/11/20	3:48 pm	new station (leaving)	2 short	south
9/15/20	6:09 pm	new station (Stopped)	2 long 1 short	south
9/15/20	6:10 pm	new station (leaving)	2 short	south
9/15/20	6:11 pm	old station	2 long 1 short 3 long 1 short 1 long	south
9/15/20	6:12 pm	Ward Street	2 long 1short 1 long	south
9/16/20	11:45 am	new station (stopped)	2 long 1 short 1 long	south
9/16/20	11:46 am	new station (leaving)	2 short	south
9/16/20	11:48 am	old station	6 long	south
9/16/20	11:49 am	Ward Street	2 long 1 short 2 long 1 short 2 long	south



## Page 3

# The Train Horn Rule and Quiet Zones



Click [here](#)

Under the Train Horn Rule (49 CFR Part 222), locomotive engineers must begin to sound train horns at least 15 seconds, and no more than 20 seconds, in advance of all public grade crossings.

If a train is traveling faster than 60 mph, engineers will not sound the horn until it is within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of the crossing, even if the advance warning is less than 15 seconds.

There is a "good faith" exception for locations where engineers can't precisely estimate their arrival at a crossing and begin to sound the horn no more than 25 seconds before arriving at the crossing.

Train horns must be sounded in a standardized pattern of 2 long, 1 short and 1 long blasts. The pattern must be repeated or prolonged until the lead locomotive or lead cab car occupies the grade crossing. The rule does not stipulate the durations of long and short blasts.

The maximum volume level for the train horn is 110 decibels which is a new requirement. The minimum sound level remains 96 decibels.



## How To Create A Quiet Zone

### Document Series

Other Reports  
Office

RRS

**Subject** Highway-Rail Grade Crossings, Train Horn Noise

**Keywords**

Final Rule on the Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings

[Guidance on the Quiet Zone Creation Process.pdf](#)

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