



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

Economic Development Commission
 Regular Meeting Minutes
 March 3, 2025

3/5/25
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 AT 12:35 PM AND RECEIVED BY
 Kristin Lange TOWN CLERK

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- Present:** Anthony Bracale, Chair
 Frank Apuzzo, Vice Chair
 Rob Fritz, Commissioner
 Nick Lombardi, Commissioner
 Austin McAnneny, Alternate
- Absent** Hank Baum, Commissioner
 Gary Gonzalez, Commissioner
 Carl Casper, Alternate
- Others Present:** Don Crouch, Economic Development Specialist
 Stacie McCarthy, EDC Secretary

Chairman Bracale called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chairman Bracale led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 (Nick Lombardi arrived at 6:31PM)
2. **Discussion on Consent Agenda:** Frank Apuzzo made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Rob Fritz seconded the motion. The Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.
3. **Items removed from Consent:** None
4. **Discussion: EDC Vacancies** - The group had a discussion regarding the current vacancies on the commission and agreed that seeking knowledgeable candidates with diversified backgrounds is of the utmost importance. Mr. Crouch explained that Alternates' Carl Casper and Austin McAnneny will assume the vacant Commissioner roles and three alternate vacancies will need to be filled. Commissioners agreed to send recommendations for new members to Mr. Crouch for consolidation of lists and then forwarded for consideration by Mayor Cervoni.
5. **Discussion: Organization of EDC Committees, Members, and Upcoming Projects**
 - **Wallingford Worldwide – May is World Trade Month** – Chairman Bracale talked to the group about World Trade Month and reiterated Mayor Cervoni's vision of *Wallingford Worldwide* where Mayor Cervoni explained 'There is a long list of prominent companies who call Wallingford home, all providing their products and services around the globe'. As a result, in support of World Trade Month, Chairman Bracale recommended recognizing the largest exporter in Wallingford. Mr. Crouch and staff will coordinate.
 - **Incentive Program** – The group discussed the current Incentive Program and how effective incentives are in attracting new businesses to Wallingford. Mr. Crouch explained that the

50 town's current incentives are narrow in focus and there may be opportunity to expand upon
51 them based on investment dollars. The group agreed that more work needs to be done to
52 understand how other towns are approaching incentives. The Marketing and Incentive
53 Committee will action and report on this effort.

- 54 • **Gateway Signs** – the group discussed the appeal of Gateway Signage located in other
55 towns and agreed these types of signs would benefit Wallingford. Commissioner Lombardi
56 noted how aesthetically appealing the 'Welcome to Wallingford' sign looks that was placed off
57 of exit 14, 191 North by local Girl Scout Troop. The group discussed the various capacities
58 that such signage could be used for i.e. business sponsorships, directional, informational,
59 educational etc. Mr. Crouch explained that the Town has looked into creating a program and
60 locations need to be identified to determine if they are publicly or privately owned.
61 Commissioner Fritz requested that all Commissioners scout possible locations and report
62 back to the Commission at the next meeting. Commissioner Fritz suggested the group will
63 then compare notes on locations to create a comprehensive list of potential locations. The
64 group agreed and will continue to pursue this project in the coming months. The Marketing
65 and Incentive Committee will action and report on this effort.

67 **6. Reports of Committees and Staff:**

- 68 • **Marketing & Retention** - Chairman Bracale explained that with many Commissioners joining
69 the EDC over the past year, a new focus on committee representation is important. He
70 explained that he was the past Chairman of the Marketing Committee but with his new role
71 as Chairman of the EDC he will no longer Chair the Marketing Committee. As a result,
72 Commissioner Lombardi agreed to Chair the Marketing Committee. Additionally Chair
73 Bracale, recommended that the Marketing and Retention Committees continue to be
74 combined for this year. As a result, Chair Bracale suggested Commissioner McAnneny
75 participate given his financial background and experience. Mr. Crouch supported
76 Commissioner McAnneny's participation, further reiterating that his experience and skill set
77 would be an asset to the group. Commissioner McAnneny agreed to participate on the
78 Marketing and Retention Committee. The group also discussed how both the Incentive
79 Program and the Mayor's Business Visits will be part of the Marketing and Retention
80 Committee's initiatives.

81
82 Chairman Bracale shared a printed copy of the Virtual Downtown Wallingford Map that was
83 created by Wallingford Center Inc. and financially supported by EDC.

- 84
85 • **Planning & Zoning Liaison** – Chairman Bracale explained he would like to discuss a
86 Planning and Zoning Committee at a future meeting when both Commissioners' Casper and
87 Gonzalez are in attendance as he would like them to participate on this committee. The
88 group agreed with this recommendation.
- 89
90 • **WCI / EDC Strategic Working Group** – Mr. Crouch explained that a group of
91 representatives from WCI and EDC have been working together to create a strategic plan
92 related to downtown projects. He explained that Commissioners' Lombardi and Fritz have
93 also participated in these discussions.
- 94
95 - **RR Station** – Commissioner Lombardi explained that members of this working group
96 have had conversations regarding the RR Station and how they can assist in seeking out
97 possible uses for the building going forward. He and other members of the group are
98 committed to finding opportunities that best serve the needs of the Town while preserving
99 the historical integrity of the building and they are using their individual experience and
100 skill sets to build a strategic plan that they hope to be able to present to the Town in the

101 future. The Commissioners were all encouraged by their commitment to this very
102 important project and anticipate hearing about the group's progress in the future.
103 - **Downtown Parking Lots Improvement** – Mr. Crouch explained there have been
104 meetings with various Town Department Heads including himself, Town Planner, Town
105 Engineer, Public Work Director and Mayor Cervoni to develop a plan of improvement for
106 downtown parking lots. As the plan is still being developed, Mr. Crouch will share
107 updates in the future.
108 - **Facade Program** – In conjunction with the downtown parking lot improvement project, the
109 group discussed the need for facade improvement on the rear side of the buildings facing
110 the parking lots. Mayor Cervoni has conveyed that he would like the facades improved not
111 only to create a more appealing aesthetic, but to also create more opportunities for
112 businesses to potentially use the renovated outdoor space. Commissioner Lombardi
113 explained that WCI currently has a 'Facade Improvement Program' in place that provides
114 an economic incentive to '*ANY BUILDING OWNER, TENANT OR STRUCTURE*
115 *LOCATED WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT DEFINED AS CURTIS*
116 *STREET TO PRINCE AND POMEROY AVENUE TO WASHINGTON STREET.*' but many
117 businesses have not taken advantage of the program. The Marketing and Incentive
118 Committee will review and discuss the current incentive for possible recommendations that
119 would generate interest and engagement in the program.
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122 **7. New Business:**

- 123 • No new business to discuss.

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125 **8. Staff Report** – Mr. Crouch noted some of the updates on his report including his meeting with a local
126 developer regarding North Colony project as well as his continued conversations with a company
127 looking to move their manufacturing business to Wallingford along with purchasing a building.
128 Additionally, Mr. Crouch shared that the Marriott Fairfield Inn located at 100 Miles Drive, Wallingford is
129 scheduled for auction April 14-16, seeking a new owner and operator for the 116-room hotel, with bids
130 starting just over \$2 million. Lastly, Mr. Crouch shared that Mayor Cervoni's office is working to
131 schedule business visits in the coming months as well as a tour of the new Wallingford Police Facility at
132 100 Barnes Road for town Department Heads and EDC. Mr. Crouch and staff will provide more
133 information when available.
134

135 **9. Chair's remarks** – Chairman Bracale explained that he is excited to work with the new group of
136 Commissioners and he plans to meet with Mr. Crouch and Mayor Cervoni to outline the goals and
137 objectives of the EDC as well as work to build a strategic EDC plan that will best serve and support the
138 town in the coming years. Chairman Bracale also recognized and acknowledged former Chair Hank
139 Baum's contribution to the EDC during his tenure as Commissioner and Chair.
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142 **There being no further business, Frank Apuzzo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m.;**
143 **Rob Fritz seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**
144

145 Sincerely,

146
147 *Stacie McCarthy*

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149 Stacie McCarthy, Secretary
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