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5 **Economic Development Commission**
6 **Regular Meeting Minutes**
7 **October 1, 2018**
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9 **Present:** Joe Mirra, Chair
10 Jim Wolfe, Vice-Chair
11 Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner
12 Gary Fappiano, Commissioner
13 Mark Gingras, Commissioner
14 Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner
15 Rob Fritz, Alternate/Voting Member
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17 **Absent:** Hank Baum, Commissioner
18 Russ Mills, Alternate
19 Ed Zavaski, Alternate
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21 **Others Present:** James Manley, VP, Business Development, Calare Properties
22 Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist
23 Lynn Wolff, Secretary
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26 Chair Joe Mirra called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.
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- 28 **1. Presentation by and discussion with Calare Properties** – Chair Mirra welcomed Mr. Manley to the
29 meeting. Mr. Manley began with a brief history of Calare Properties. Even before purchasing the Bristol-
30 Myers Squibb site, Calare started marketing the property as is but have had no takers to date. Now Calare
31 proposes to demolish the current building and construct two warehouse distribution buildings that will be
32 available for lease or sale. The on-site day care center and possible third building are not part of the initial
33 proposal. Gary Fappiano asked what the lease price might be; Mr. Manley said \$6.75 triple net. Calare has
34 contracted BL Companies to prepare the site plans. BL is a reputable firm (based in Meriden) that has
35 extensive experience in large projects and has recently completed the very large FedEx site in Middletown.
36 Joe Mirra asked what issues Mr. Manley anticipates when the proposal goes before IWWC and PZC. Jim
37 Wolfe reminded the EDC that Calare has already appeared before IWWC two times and is again appearing
38 this Wednesday. Mr. Manley said that protecting water supply (the Muddy River) is the biggest issue.
39 Calare has already agreed to increase the number of silt barriers to three (3) and has also agreed to every
40 other stipulation made by IWWC and its staff. Mark Gingras asked whether there were any comments from
41 area residents. Jim Manley said two residents had concerns about how the proposed demolition and
42 construction will impact their wells. Calare agreed to test the wells before work begins; this will provide a
43 baseline measurement for everyone in case any issues arise after the work is done. Calare also agreed to
44 hire, at the request of the Town, a third party reviewer to evaluate all site-work plans. The third party

45 reviewer will also oversee all site work progress. Jim Wolfe asked what the proposed timeline for the project
46 will be once approval from IWWC and PZC has been given. Mr. Manley said they are about six months
47 behind their initial timeline; they now hope to start demolition of the existing building in January 2019; begin
48 building by July/August 2019; complete the first building by April-July 2020 and complete the second building
49 by September 2020. Jim Wolfe also asked if Calare plans to hire locally for any of its work. Mr. Manley said
50 they plan to source locally for building materials and are looking to hire locally for the demolition project. Tim
51 Ryan reminded the Commission that Calare Properties has met multiple times with many of the Town
52 departments to make sure that what they propose to do is acceptable to the Town. *Jim Wolfe made a motion*
53 *to verbally and by letter support Calare Properties' project as it goes before IWWC and PZC; Mark Gingras*
54 *seconded the motion. By unanimous vote of the six members in attendance, the motion passed. It was*
55 *agreed that Joe Mirra, Jim Wolfe and Tim Ryan will attend and represent the EDC at the IWWC meeting on*
56 *October 3. The Chair will decide if additional EDC members should attend the PZC meeting on October 10.*
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58 **2. Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated September 10, 2018 – Patricia**
59 **Cymbala made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Jim Wolfe seconded the motion. By a**
60 **vote of 6 yeases, the motion carried.**
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62 **3. Review of Monthly Expenditure Report – No comments on the August report.**

63
64 **4. Committee Reports**

65 • **Marketing –**

- 66 ➤ **Update on meeting discussion** – Patricia Cymbala reviewed what the Committee discussed on
67 September 6 (as highlighted in the September 10 minutes). Regarding the idea of an Arts
68 Council, Joe Mirra asked if contact had been made with WCI; Patricia said yes, Rob has talked to
69 Liz Landow. Regarding vacant buildings, Jim Wolfe asked why all vacancies are not listed on the
70 link from our website. Tim Ryan said that the link for the Site Finder is provided by CERC and
71 brokers must subscribe to this service in order to list properties. If the broker chooses not to
72 subscribe, the vacancy will not be listed. Rosemarie Preneta asked if there has been any interest
73 in the Bank of America building. Tim said CB Richard Ellis will market that building in late
74 October; the building is now vacant.

75 Rob Fritz arrived at 7:20 and was asked to be a voting member.

76 Discussion continued about the work of the Arts Council. Rob Fritz said Patricia has been
77 focusing on getting the public schools involved. Rob will meet this month, hopefully, with some
78 local organizations/businesses to get them involved as well. Joe Mirra suggested Rob consider
79 talking to the Senior Center – they have a strong interest in art as well.

- 80 ➤ **Next meeting:** October 15, 2018 at 8:00 a.m.
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- **P&Z Liaison –**

- **Update on Committee activities** – Based on an item in Tim Ryan’s July staff report about working with a company in Barnes Park, Jim Wolfe said he would like the Committee and staff to start discussions with the Planning & Zoning Office re: reducing the open space requirement in Barnes Park. Tim Ryan said that he knows Kacie is happy to work on that, as well as the I-5 zone requirements, but said that right now that office is very busy with existing projects. Tim said that the company he referenced in his July report requested reducing the open space requirement from 50% to 41%. Kacie is supportive of the concept design and is willing to take a deeper dive if/when the developer is ready to move forward. Jim wondered if the discussion on reducing the open space requirements could begin early next year; Tim said he’s not comfortable having that conversation at this time given the current workload in the P&Z Office. Regarding the Calare Properties project, Joe Mirra said that, once BMS leaves, people need to remember that the taxable income will drop dramatically. It is in everyone’s best interests that the Calare Properties project moves forward quickly in order to start generating taxable income again.
- **Next meeting** – No next meeting has been scheduled.

- **Retention/Incentives –**

- **Update on Committee activities** – Gary Fappiano said the Committee met on September 21 and agreed to schedule company visits for November 10 and 13; staff will contact the companies. The Committee also discussed retention issues; it was determined that most businesses like Wallingford but are unhappy with things on the state level. Tim added that this was definitely the case with Edible Arrangements and reviewed the events that led to Edible’s decision to move its headquarters to Atlanta.
- **Next meeting** – Gary said he will contact staff to set up the next meeting.

5. **Chair’s remarks** – Joe Mirra said the PUC now offers an incentive program for new businesses in the Town Center Zone that will greatly reduce a connection fee charged (under certain circumstances) by the Water & Sewer Divisions. Tim Ryan briefly explained this new incentive and thanked Neil Amwake, General Manager, Water & Sewer Division, for the work he did to help develop and implement this new incentive.

Joe said he continues to work on the Pipeline Program for manufacturers and that a health care pipeline and a general pipeline are in the works as well. Joe will update the EDC as details develop.

Joe also reported that Workforce Alliance is doing more and more work for the Town but feels we need to do more to educate residents about what this organization can do.

Gary Fappiano suggested that Joe send out information sooner, rather than later, regarding a summer jobs program. Joe said that information about the Summer Ambassador Program (that provides jobs for students for 6 weeks in the summer) should go out to businesses no later than March 2019.

120 **6. Staff reports/regional matters** – Tim Ryan said there were only a few items to highlight in the August and
 121 September reports (as attached to the agenda packet). We currently have a 30% vacancy rate for office
 122 space. This was calculated before several companies recently announced they were leaving so Tim
 123 estimates the rate could be as high as 35%. Tim mentioned an auction for a three-building deal that included
 124 the Signature 91 building was held and there were no bids on the Signature 91 building. Brothers Restaurant
 125 property was rescheduled to be auctioned on October 13; the Town has an interest in purchasing this site.
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127 **7. Dates to Remember** – A sign-up sheet for help at The Big Connect trade show was distributed and the dates
 128 of the company visits were mentioned.
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130 **8. Community Involvement** – Jim Wolfe asked about an item in the August Staff Report concerning additional
 131 rail sitings; Tim said one location was near Ferti Technologies and the other was near Toelles Road.

132 Patricia Cymbala asked what the Town might expect in taxes if the Calare Properties project goes
 133 forward. Tim reminded the EDC that BMS was the highest and best possible use for that zone so any other
 134 use will certainly not generate as much in taxes. BMS, at its peak, generated about \$3 million in real estate
 135 and personal property taxes. The warehouses/distribution centers proposed by Calare might generate \$2.2
 136 million, a projection calculated by our Tax Assessor.

137 Mark Gingras asked about the ribbon cutting for CT Adjusters. Joe Mirra said it was changed from
 138 October 3 to October 15 – only those who plan to attend need to reply.
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140 **There being no further business, Rosemarie Preneta made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.;**
 141 **Patricia Cymbala seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

142
 143 Sincerely,

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 146 Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary
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