



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

## **Economic Development Commission** **Regular Meeting** **Minutes - Approved**

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 5:30pm  
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

### **1) Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:32pm. Commission members Tom Earl, Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy, Peter Van Loon, Ron Jodice, and Lori Wagner were present. Ex officio member Bill Rice (Planning Commission), and Board of Selectmen liaison Jackie Battos were also present. Staff members in attendance included Maria Capriola, Town Manager, Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager, Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Andrew 'Sherm' Sherman, Business and Career Center Coordinator.

#### **a) Introduction of Lori Wagner, New EDC Member**

Mr. Crowther welcomed the new member to the EDC, Lori Wagner. Ms. Wagner introduced herself and provided an overview of her background and experience.

### **2) Business Recovery**

#### **a) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership**

Mr. Crowther gave a report in Ms. Nielsen's absence. He said that Ms. Nielsen relayed that the marketing contract has been submitted to the Town Manager and that it is currently under review.

#### **b) Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce**

None

#### **c) Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian**

Mr. Sherman said that he continues to send out resources for businesses, and that the Library is still operating with its limited hours until further notice. Ms. Capriola said that Town Hall is operating on limited hours, as well.

#### **d) Other**

None

### **3) 2020-2021 EDC Work Plan**

The committee discussed the draft work plan, and the member assignments to each work stream. In particular, the group discussed the "Support Entrepreneurs - Support infrastructure for entrepreneurs" item. Mr. Crowther requested an update from Mr. Van Loon and Mr. Jodice. Discussion ensued regarding the feedback received during recent business outreach visits as it pertains to the need for more reliable internet and utility

services. Mr. Crowther asked what, if anything, the Town can do to support this. For example, he asked whether the Town can play a role in expanding bandwidth. Ms. Capriola explained that municipalities in Connecticut are not permitted to run their own internet utility, but that we can certainly advocate for improved service.

#### **4) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates**

##### **a) Business Incentive Policy**

Ms. Capriola said that the final draft is under review by the Town Attorney; staff aims to have this on the Board of Selectmen agenda in December.

##### **b) Co-working Spaces**

The work group is still working on reaching out to landlords.

##### **c) Business Outreach**

Mr. Crowther said that recent visits were held with Mitchell Auto and McLean; he shared the feedback received at those visits. He said that the next visits to be scheduled are with MicroSemi and Hoffman Auto.

Mr. Crowther said that he and Morgan Hilyard discussed the best way to engage the second tier businesses, and they decided that the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee would be an appropriate venue for this to take place. One Government Affairs meeting per quarter could take the form of a small business roundtable, with the businesses to be organized by discipline, geographic location, or another identifying category. Mr. Crowther and Mr. Earl will brainstorm ways to engage businesses and encourage them to attend.

##### **d) Marketing**

Ms. Capriola said that the Town Manager's Office is reviewing the draft contract and that she is hoping to execute it by the end of the month. Ms. Freeman said that the scope of work looks good, and includes everything we were looking for. She said that the timeline is 60-90 days once the project commences.

##### **e) Other**

The group discussed the new "shadowing" program. Mr. Earl has been assigned to the first development project.

#### **5) Minutes – October 28, 2020**

Mr. Crowther noted that under section 2(d), the CT Sustainability Team program includes a \$7,500 contribution, with the matching funds to be raised via crowdfunding, not from the Town itself. With that correction, the minutes were approved by consensus.

Mr. Jodice alerted the group to the discussions taking place with the Planning and Zoning Commissions regarding the affordable housing plan. Mr. Glidden and Mr. Rice explained that according to state statute, the Town is required to develop an affordable housing plan; the meetings that have taken place so far have focused on soliciting public input. Discussion ensued regarding the statutory requirements, the Town's current level of affordable housing, and the EDC's potential role in this process. Mr. Rice said that the EDC can assist by researching

sample approaches to affordable housing. He specifically referenced Toronto's model; Mr. Earl said he would look into this.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Van Loon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25pm. Ms. Seavy seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa Appleby  
Deputy Town Manager