

Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Watch Economic Development Commission meetings LIVE and rebroadcast on Comcast Channels 96, 1090, Frontier Channel 6071 and LIVE streamed or on-demand at www.simsburytv.org

Economic Development Commission

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

5:30 pm

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

- 1) Business Recovery
 - a. Oral Report from Main Street Partnership
 - b. Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce
 - c. Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian
 - d. Outreach to Stakeholders
 - e. Other
- 2) 2019-2020 EDC Annual Report
- 3) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates
 - a. Marketing
 - b. Co-working Spaces
 - c. Business Outreach
 - d. Business Incentive Policy
 - e. Other
- 4) Recovery-Friendly Community Initiative
- 5) Update on Assigning EDC Members to Development Projects
- 6) Minutes August 26, 2020

Adjournment

Town of Simsbury Economic Development Commission

Yearly Update
October 2019 – September 2020

Draft

Agenda

- Economic Development Commission (EDC) Mission & Team Members
- Overview of Economic Development in Simsbury and the Role of the EDC
- Review existing Workstream Projects and Team Assignments
- Accomplishments to Date
- Plans for next 6-12 Months
- Q&A Session
- Appendix

Draft

Economic Development Commission (EDC) Mission & Team Members

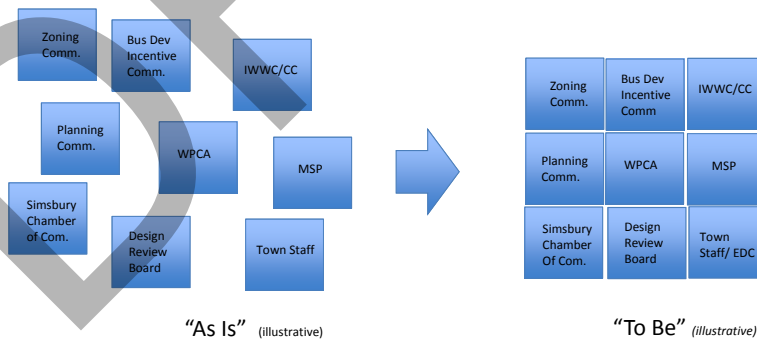
- EDC Mission Statement
 - *The Commission shall serve as an advisory board to the Board of Selectman. The purpose of the Commission shall be to promote and develop the economic resources of the Town and to advance the Town’s economic development goals as defined by the Board of Selectman. The Commission shall be empowered to conduct research into economic conditions and trends, and to collaborate with community organizations which promote economic development.*

- Team Members
 - Bob Crowther, Chair, Business Recruitment, Outreach & Retention, liaison to Sustainability Committee
 - Tom Earl - Business Incentives, liaison to Business Development Incentive Committee
 - Brooke Freeman - Support Entrepreneurs, liaison to MSP
 - Ron Jodice – Liaison to Zoning Commission
 - Peter Van Loon – Business Incentives, Co-working, liaison to Business Development Incentive Committee
 - Charmaine Seavy – Support Entrepreneurs, liaison to Tourism

- Staff Members, Ex-Officio Members, and Community Partners
 - Maria Capriola - Town Manager and ex-officio member
 - Melissa Appleby - Deputy Town Manager
 - Mike Glidden - Director of Planning & Community Development
 - Tom Fitzgerald – Management Specialist
 - Morgan Hilyard - Director of Simsbury Chamber of Commerce
 - Sarah Nielsen – Executive Director of Main Street Partnership
 - Bill Rice – ex officio member from the Planning Commission
 - Diane Madigan – ex officio member from the Zoning Commission
 - Andrew Sherman – Simsbury Library Business and Career Center Coordinator
 - Jackie Battos – Board of Selectmen representative and ex-officio member

Draft

The role of the EDC is to create an environment that will enable economic development to occur in Simsbury through effective communication and efficient processes



- **Communication** – The EDC will work across the groups to share information, help identify issues and assist in problem solving. We will do this by attending each others meetings, having a liaison to the other commissions, and reporting to the larger group.

- **Process** – Having efficient Economic Develop Processes will ensure that Simsbury is being responsive to existing and future business owners. We will do this through our Business Outreach process and continuous improvement of the Business Development approval process cycle.

Draft

The Commission was initially tasked with four (4) Work Streams with additional Work Streams being created through these efforts.

Work Stream	Task	Assignments	Status
Business Incentives*	Complete research on business incentives. Provide recommendations/updates to Business Incentive Policy.	Tom Earl & Peter Van Loon Staff: Maria Capriola	Final draft is in review before submission to Board of Selectmen
Marketing*	Complete marketing materials refresh for tourism, real estate, and business recruitment	Charmaine Seavy & Brooke Freeman Staff: Sarah Nielsen	Activity impacted by COVID response. Funding carry forward to FY 19/20. Scope of work being prepared.
Business recruitment, retention & outreach*	Create a process to conduct business outreach. Collect & track feedback	Bob Crowther, Charmaine Seavy & Tom Earl Staff: Mike Glidden	Process has been created, and began implementing in early 2020. Efforts impacted by COVID-19.
Strategic Vision*	Review past studies to identify items for implementation	Bob Crowther & Ron Jodice Staff: Melissa Appleby & Mike Glidden	Implemented recommendations for Zoning approval processes and consolidation of Land Use Regulations
Marketing	Assist with promoting Simsbury 350 th Anniversary events	Charmaine Seavy, TBD Staff: Lisa Karim	Impacted by COVID-19
Support Entrepreneurs	Promote access to business resources, information and infrastructure for entrepreneurs.	Peter Van Loon & Ron Jodice Staff: Andrew Sherman	Work in progress
Support Entrepreneurs	Develop a town-wide plan to create co-working space	Peter Van Loon & Ron Jodice Staff: Andrew Sherman	Work in progress
Business Outreach	Assist with gathering feedback on wayfinding signage needs (type, location, etc)	TBD – 2 Staff: Sarah Nielsen	Placed on hold due to no appropriation in FY 19/20 or FY 20/21.

* Original 4 Workstreams

The Business Incentives team has completed extensive research and is preparing the final document recommendation for the Board of Selectmen to review and approve

- EDC Leads – Peter Van Loon, Tom Earl with Maria Capriola

Research

- Reviewed current Simsbury incentives
- Spoke to other towns about their incentives, processes and results , i.e. Windsor, West Hartford, Manchester
- Reviewed web sites of other states and cities
- Leveraged the EDC roundtable to query Simsbury business leaders and owners
- Reviewed recent survey spreadsheet of 30 towns in Connecticut that focused on types of business incentives each town offered
 - 7 of the 30 towns did not offer incentives
 - Several offered tax incentives and no or reduced permit fees.

Activities in 2018-19

- EDC has a representative on the Business Development Incentive Committee
- Worked through the EBAD application process and ultimate approval of the Tax Abatements

Insights Gained/Lessons Learned

- Incentives are derived and subject to state law
- Transparency is a “must” into the process, from permitting to business incentive approval, and its ease of use is of primary importance.
- Financial incentives are not a primary reason for locating or expanding in Simsbury. Attitude and other economic factors, e.g. labor pool quality, quality of life, access to transportation, are of primary consideration
- Businesses desire certainty of government action for their own planning, i.e. “. . . **Get the process right!**”
- Town of Simsbury is regarded for its supportive attitude towards business

Activity in 2019-20

- Completed and have done multiple iterations of draft recommendations for Town Policy on Business Incentives.
- After final review with Town Manager, will present to Board of Selectmen in 4Q 2020 for final approval

Draft

Strategic Vision - From the recommendations of the multiple Town Studies, the Economic Development Commission has completed its tasks on four (4) additional Work Streams

EDC Leads – Bob Crowther, Ron Jodice with Melissa Appleby & Mike Glidden

Identified workstreams from 2019 analysis	Responsible parties	Status
1. Review the application approval process for any new or existing land use proposals to ensure it is as efficient and effective as possible	Ron Jodice, Jackie Battos, Mike Glidden	Completed
2. Review and amend Land Use regulations to consolidate and simplify zoning regulations to facilitate economic development	Mike Glidden	Completed
3. Create an Economic Development Project Evaluation and Discussion Guide	Bob Crowther, Melissa Appleby	Completed
4. Create an orientation and continuous education process for commission members	Team	Ongoing

Draft

Business Recruitment, Retention and Outreach – A visitation process and schedule has been created to build relationships with Simsbury’s major businesses. Visitations were regrettably postponed due to COVID-19.

Business	Month	Call participants
Curaleaf	January*	M Capriola, B Crowther, J Battos, M Appleby
Drake Hill Mall	February*	M Capriola, B Crowther, C Seavy
Dyno Nobel Inc	March	M Capriola, P Van Loon, R Jodice
Ensign Bickford Aerospace & Defense (EBAD)	April	M Capriola, P Van Loon, R Jodice
Highcroft Simsbury LLC	May	M Capriola, T Earl, B Crowther
Hoffman Brothers Auto	June	M Capriola, C Seavy, B Crowther
McLean Home Care	July	M Capriola, C Seavy, B Crowther
Micro Semi	August	M Capriola, R Jodice, B Crowther
Mitchell’s Auto	September	M Capriola, R Jodice, B Crowther
Simsbury Town Shoppes	October	M Capriola, R Jodice, B Crowther
Simsmore Square Enterprise	November	M Capriola, C Seavy, B Crowther

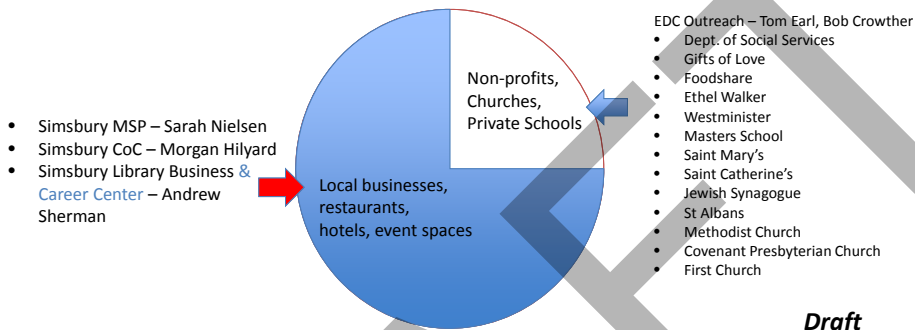
* Visitations completed in 2020

Draft

The EDC supported the Simsbury Long Term Recovery program effort from the COVID crisis through the Business Outreach process

Background

- Under the joint leadership of the State Department of Economic and Community Development, the Connecticut Department of Insurance, and the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the State of CT has created a Long-Term Recovery Committee.
- The Committee has reached out to each Town to have them implement a Long Term Recovery plan. The approach to creating the plan is one based on "lessons learned" from other local disasters such as Super Storm Sandy and Hurricane Maria. It is through the roll up of each Local Town's Plan that a state-wide approach to recovery can be created.
- In addition to our local businesses, the plan should take into account a holistic approach that includes participation of all community partners such as social services and faith-based organizations, local government agencies, private sector and philanthropic partners, and organizations that serve diverse populations to ensure the interest of all.
- Given that the Simsbury Mainstreet Partnership Program (MSP), Chamber of Commerce (CoC) and Library Business & Career Center were already actively engaged with the majority of businesses in the Town, the decision was made that the Town had an effective program in place.
- However, it left an opportunity to reach out to other organizations to gather a more holistic view.



Draft

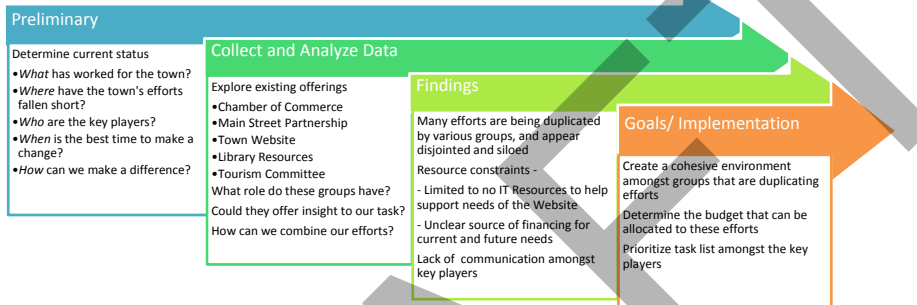
While all of these organizations have been able to manage through the crisis, many expressed concerns that their efforts are not sustainable and the uncertainty of what will happen as we head into the months ahead

Interview Findings Summary

- **Social Service Organizations** (Simsbury Department of Social Services, Gifts of Love, Foodshare)
 - Increased demand for food & clothing has generated an increased demand for public giving. The people of Simsbury have stepped up!
 - DSS increased their food pantry and food gift card distribution offering from 1 per month to 1 every 3 weeks.
 - Gifts of Love has been able to maintain the "Backpack" food program to 225 needy students in the Farmington Valley
 - Foodshare provides meals to over 100 people every 2 weeks with volunteer help from members of First Church
 - Concerned with sustainability of programs, especially as government programs end and the potential for greater demands on their programs
- **Private Schools**
 - Demand has increased as seen as "safe" options with lower class sizes and CT having control on virus
 - Many have secured Payroll Protection funding to keep staffs fully employed
 - Access to Testing critical to successful opening, as draw students from across the country
 - Will continue to need access to Personal Protective Equipment
- **Churches**
 - Many impacted by going to online Sunday services and seeing a decline in participation. St Mary's has resumed services, but to a much smaller group.
 - Mixed reviews on ability of members to handle technology for online services, some doing much better than others
 - With a decline in service participation, donations have remained strong and many have secured funding through Government programs, so doing OK financially.
 - Church "Giving" and volunteer programs have remained strong through out.
 - While many expressed that "... doing better now than what was anticipated back in March", concerned with what the next 6 months will bring as the weather forces folks back inside and uncertainty of availability of government programs
 - Senior citizens in the Churches most impacted as Church is a major source of socialization for many

Support Entrepreneurs – The workstream will be a long term effort as it expands to include overall marketing from design of the Town Website to participation in the Hospitality & Tourism Task Force.

- EDC Leads – Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy with Sarah Nielson
- Goal – *Achieve a level of consistency of messaging across all Town marketing platforms*
- Activity in 2019-20
 - Secured funding for initial development of Town Marketing Brochure
 - COVID-19 response took priority for majority of year, so activity was put on hold
 - Received proposed scope of work from local marketing firm



Draft

The COVID crisis has created the opportunity to work with local businesses, the Chamber, MSP and the Library Business Resource Center to develop a Town approach to Coworking Space

- **Definition.** A co-working space has some combination of individual office space, open office space, conference rooms and shared services (e.g. internet, scheduling, printing). These spaces are not business incubators, where resident companies and entrepreneurs are often chosen and managed with the goal of turning a profit. Incubators are often focused on specific industries, services and/or technologies.
- **Background:** Co-working spaces have become popular in the last few years for entrepreneurs and occasional or permanent spaces for corporate work-at-home employees. The COVID crisis has only increased the demand for such spaces as individual and small business owners work at home.
- In Simsbury, the Public Library Business Resource Center is actively expanding to serve startups and other businesses. The success of the library's efforts will require space outside that building. The EDC is acting to catalyze such expansion and potentially subsidize it with fee waivers and tax abatements.
- *In the interest of simplicity and getting underway, EDC will work with CoC/SMSP/BRC to identify landlords eager to rent or even donate space for co-working, with coordination to be done between the individual worker and the landlord. The rationale is there are people now eager to take advantage of co-working. Any detailed planning will not only take time but will not be informed by incremental and immediate progress.*
- Over time, we can plan in greater detail for co-working spaces in town to address how, where, and for whom the spaces are to be developed and managed.
- Any co-working space in town should be marketed as one more positive reason for people to move to Simsbury

Going forward, the Team will continue to implement work on existing workstreams and entertain new initiatives

- One new workstream underway is to assign an EDC member to each of the large development projects currently working their way through the Town approval processes
- The goal is to begin to build a long-term relationship by being aware of the full history of the company through the approval processes to completion and implementation in the years ahead
 - Step 1 was to define a set of parameters for the role of the EDC member as an “Observer” of the process and not interfere or try to get involved with the process that requires specific knowledge of regulations and procedures
 - Step 2 will be to create the list of projects
 - Step 3 will be to assign a different EDC Member to each project and begin to implement the process

- *Other opportunities / suggestions?*
- *Questions / Comments / Feedback ?*

Draft

DRAFT

**Co-Working Space Development in Simsbury Connecticut – Assumption and Proposed Tasks
For EDC review Draft #2**

Background: Co-working spaces have become popular in the last few years for entrepreneurs and occasional or permanent spaces for corporate work-at-home employees. In Simsbury, the Public Library Business Resource Center is actively expanding to serve startups and other businesses. The success of the library’s efforts will require space outside that building. The EDC is acting to catalyze such expansion and potentially subsidize it with fee waivers and tax abatements.

Definition. A co-working space has some combination of individual office space, open office space, conference rooms and shared services (e.g. internet, scheduling, printing). These spaces are not business incubators, where resident companies and entrepreneurs are often chosen and managed with the goal of turning a profit. Incubators are often focused on specific industries, services and/or technologies.

Assumptions regarding Co-Working Spaces in Simsbury

- Private: Any space will be private, i.e. neither managed nor funded by the town.
- Flexibility: Space can be rented for short(daily?) or longer durations.
- Availability: There are a variety of commercial office spaces available throughout town whose owners may be interested in developing co-working spaces.
- Demand: The move away from central, dense office spaces in the past several years has accelerated with the availability of communication technologies. The past several months has shown that a return to central and dense office space is not definite. At the same time, entrepreneurs and startups need space that will accommodate their expansion. Simsbury has work-at-home employees and entrepreneurs who are assumed to desire space outside of their homes. This core demand function can be validated through close coordination with the Library’s Business Resource Center.
- Management: EDC can develop standards for co-working spaces in town and leave individual spaces to commercial space owners. In the interest of simplicity and getting underway, EDC will work with CoC/SMSP/BRC to identify landlords eager to rent or even donate space for co-working, with coordination to be done between the individual worker and the landlord. The rationale is there are people now eager to take advantage of co-working. Any detailed planning will not only take time but will not be informed by incremental and immediate progress. If any coordination between spaces is determined to be useful, EDC will take lead to develop how and to what extent EDC will manage that coordination, e.g. developing processes and protocols to ensure equitable scheduling between spaces and for clients.

Proposed Actions by EDC

- Research: Engage CoC, Simsbury Main Street etc, to determine interest in co-working space from commercial office owners and local entrepreneurs and WAH employees. Determine investment requirements of property owners and potential town support.
- Publicize: Engage Simsbury residents with articles/information sessions to gain input, gauge demand, and understand any concerns. List individual landlords and their offerings for individuals to act upon for their own needs.
- Plan: As we move forward, we can After researching and publicizing co-working, plan in greater detail for co-working spaces in town to address how, where, and for whom the spaces are to be developed and managed.
- Market: Any co-working space in town should be marketed as one more positive reason for people to move to Simsbury.

Proposed Timeline	Key Prerequisites	Responsive Parties
-------------------	-------------------	--------------------

Co-Working Space Development in Simsbury Connecticut – Assumption and Proposed Tasks
For EDC review Draft #2

Fall 2020: Research, Publicize	1)EDC approval. 2)CoC, Simsbury MSP, SPL BRC approval	1)PVL
Fall 2020 - Winter 2020/21: Plan	1)Agreement from commercial office property owners 2)Engagement of owners	1)PVL
2021: Market	1)Management team identified	

DRAFT



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting
Minutes - DRAFT

Wednesday, August 26, 2020 at 5:30pm
Virtual Meeting Broadcast Live via SCTV

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:33pm. Commission members Bob Crowther, Peter Van Loon, Brooke Freeman (joined at 6:01), Charmaine Seavy and Ron Jodice were present. Ex officio members Eric Wellman (First Selectman) and Bill Rice (Planning Commission) were also present. Staff members in attendance included Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager, Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, Andrew 'Sherm' Sherman, Business Resource Center Coordinator and Thomas Fitzgerald, Management Specialist.

1) Business Recovery

a) Temporary Outdoor Dining for Restaurants

Mr. Glidden gave an update on outdoor dining for restaurants in town including the Governor's permit extension through November 16th, and a newly announced plan for the Millwright's parking lot.

b) Oral Report from Main Street Partnership

Mr. Crowther read a statement from Ms. Nielsen in her absence. Main Street is continuing with communicating with their business partners and PPE distribution. Mr. Crowther explained Main Street's new art contest for school age children.

c) Oral Report from Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Appleby said that Ms. Hilyard sends regrets for her absence, and that she is happy to work with the EDC in its long-term recovery outreach efforts.

d) Oral Report from Business Resource Librarian

No new updates from last EDC meeting.

e) Outreach to Stakeholders

Mr. Crowther informed the group of his continuing reach out to stakeholders in Town. He said he is hearing the concern is the next 6 months and how winter may impact limited operations based on current guidelines.

2) 2019-2020 Work Plan Updates

a) Business Incentive Policy

Mr. Van Loon informed the group of the status on the Business Incentive Policy, including the pending review by the Town Manager's Office and finalization for consideration by the Board of Selectmen.

b) Co-working Spaces

Mr. Van Loon prepared a one-page document for the group to review. Mr. Van Loon stated he envisions this process starting with private landlords creating space with a hope of the Town starting public spaces later. Mr. Van Loon will discuss the draft document further with Ms. Hilyard and Mr. Sherman. There was a discussion on how COVID limits may affect co-working; Mr. Sherman gave an update on what the Library is planning to do to follow the guidelines.

c) Business Outreach

Ms. Appleby informed the group the Town Manager's Office is looking into ways to reschedule the missed meetings with businesses because of the pandemic with virtual meetings being considered.

d) Marketing

Ms. Seavy inquired about funds for the marketing materials. Ms. Appleby noted that the funds from FY20 will need to be approved by the Board of Finance to roll over to FY21. Once this occurs, the Town Manager can execute the contract.

3) Update on EDC Requests to the Board of Selectmen

a) Informal Business Outreach

Mr. Crowther gave a review on the item.

b) Assisting With Chamber of Commerce Projects

Mr. Crowther noted that there may be an opportunity to support the Government Affairs Committee.

c) EDC Members Assigned to Development Projects

Mr. Crowther gave an update on a meeting between Ms. Capriola and Mr. Glidden in regards to assigning EDC members to specific projects. It was mentioned it was a good idea but there would need to be parameters to follow the rules of the zoning and permitting process of developments.

4) 2019-2020 EDC Annual Report

Ms. Appleby informed the group that the October 14th Board of Selectmen meeting is being targeted for the EDC to present their annual report. Mr. Crowther said he will send the draft report to the group for their thoughts. The group will discuss and do a final review of the draft document at their September meeting.

5) Minutes

a) July 22, 2020

Mr. Jodice made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Van Loon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Fitzgerald
Management Specialist