

# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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#### **Economic Development Commission**

Wednesday, September 22, 2021 5:30pm

#### **Virtual Format Only**

#### **REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

#### Call to Order

- 1) Review and Finalization of EDC 2020-2021 Annual Report
- 2) 2020-2021 EDC Work Plan Update
  - a. Marketing Project Update
  - b. Business Outreach
  - c. Other
- 3) Stakeholder and Liaison Updates
  - a. Main Street Partnership
  - b. Chamber of Commerce
  - c. Business and Career Center
  - d. Zoning
  - e. Design Review
  - f. Sustainability
  - g. SPIRIT
  - h. Development Projects
  - i. Other
  - 4) Minutes August 25, 2021

#### Adjournment

### Town of Simsbury Economic Development Commission

Yearly Update
October 2020 – September 2021

Draft

### Agenda

- Review the Economic Development Commission (EDC) Mission & Team Members
- Discuss the Role of the EDC and Economic Development in Simsbury
- Review existing Workstream Projects and Team Assignments
- Review Accomplishments from 10/20 9/21
- Discuss Plans for next 6-12 Months
- Q&A Session

#### Economic Development Commission (EDC) Mission & Team Members

#### FDC 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.

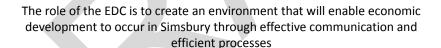
#### Current Team Members

- Bob Crowther Chair, Business Outreach, liaison to Sustainability Committee & Design Review Board
- Tom Earl Vice Chair, Business Incentives and Business Outreach, liaison to Planning and Land Use for Development projects & Spirit Council
- Brooke Freeman Marketing, liaison to Simsbury Mainstreet Partnership Program
- Ron Jodice Supporting Entrepreneurs, liaison to Zoning Commission, Short-Term Rental Ordinance Committee member
- Peter Van Loon Business Incentives, Supporting Entrepreneurs Business Development Incentive Committee member
- Charmaine Seavy Marketing, Business Outreach, liaison to Tourism & Simsbury Mainstreet Partnership Program

#### • 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







"As Is" (illustrative)

"To Be" (illustrative)

- Examples of how this approach is working
  - Sarah Nielsen working in close relations with Mike Glidden & Maria Capriola on new and existing development initiatives
  - Working with Morgan Hilyard and David Richmon from the Chamber of Commerce to develop a more robust Government Affairs monthly meeting
  - Working with the Chamber to create a website to promote Co-working office opportunities
  - Supporting the work initiated by Sarah Nielsen to refresh the Town Marketing Brand messaging
  - $\,-\,\,$  Providing a liaison from the EDC to Town Committees and being actively involved
  - Sarah Nielsen and Bob Crowther worked with Town Parks & Rec to selected new restaurant vendor for Simsbury Farms

Work Stream	Task	Person/People	Status
Business Incentives	Complete research on business incentives. Provide recommendations/update Business Incentive Policy.	Peter Van Loon, Tom Earl Staff: Maria Capriola, Melissa Appleby	Policy adopted by BOS February 2021. Project complete.
Marketing	Complete marketing materials refresh for tourism, real estate, and business recruitment purposes.	Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy Staff: Sarah Nielsen	Survey and focus groups completed. Marketing materials refresh underway.
Business Outreach	Conduct business outreach. Collect and track feedback.	Bob Crowther, Charmaine Seavy, Tom Earl Staff: Maria Capriola, Melissa Appleby, Mike Glidden, Tom Fitzgerald	Ongoing; conducting visits virtually due to the pandemic
Business Outreach	Implement EDC member shadow program for development projects.	Tom Earl, Peter Van Loon Staff: Mike Glidden	Ongoing
Business Outreach	Assist with gathering feedback on wayfinding signage needs (type, location, etc).	To be Determined (2) Staff: Sarah Nielsen	Funding for wayfinding signage pushed out to FY22
Support Entrepreneurs	Support infrastructure for entrepreneurs. Promote access to business resources, information, and infrastructure.	Peter Van Loon, Ron Jodice Staff: Andrew Sherman	Ongoing
Support Entrepreneurs	Develop a plan for co-working space.	Peter Van Loon, Ron Jodice, Tom Earl Staff: Andrew Sherman, Morgan Hilyard	Proposal endorsed by EDC and submitted to Town Manager's Office; awaiting discussion on funding as part of ARPA work group.

#### Business Incentives – Update Business Incentive Policy

- EDC Leads –Tom Earl, Peter van Loon, Maria Capriola, Melissa Appleby, Mike Glidden
- Completed research on business incentives. Provided recommendations to the Board f Selectmen to update the Business Incentive Policy.
- Replacement policy, Fee Waiver and Tax Abatement Program Guidelines, adopted by the Board of Selectmen February 2021.
- Submitted to Board of Selectmen aspirational economic development strategies to attract and retain businesses.
- Project now complete.

#### Business Outreach – The process continues to be modified to determine a "best fit" approach to reaching our business clients

- EDC Leads Bob Crowther, Tom Earl, Charmaine Seavy, Maria Capriola, Melissa Appleby, Mike Glidden, Tom Fitzgerald
- **Business Outreach to top taxpayers** 
  - Mitchell Auto 10/20
  - Dyno Nobel 10/20
  - Landworks Development 10/20
  - EBAD 11/20
  - McLean 11/20 and 05/21
  - Curaleaf 05/21
  - Andreo Family 09/21
- Due to COVID, needed to shift to virtual visits.
- Working with Morgan Hilyard and David Richmon, we created a "refresh" to the Chamber Government Affairs Committee to bring Town Hall to our Business Leaders
  - Mike Glidden Development Update 03/21
  - Maria Capriola 2021/22 budget and major projects update 04/21
  - Steve Antonio Design Review Board update 06/21
  - Dave Ryan Zoning Commission Update & Discussion 07/21
  - Sarah Nielsen Marketing Refresh Update & Discussion 11/21

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#### The EDC did a follow up set of interviews in 2021 from the 2020 Long-term Recovery program to see how Non-profit organizations fared through the Pandemic

#### Interview Findings Summary

- Social Service Organizations (Simsbury Department of Social Services, Gifts of Love)
  - I Service Organizations (SIMSDUTY Department of SOCIal Services, Gills of Lovey)

    Food insecurity throughout the Pandemic has generated an increased demand for public giving. The people of Simsbury have stepped up!

    Gifts of Love & DSS saw an increase in demand for services with DSS experiencing a doubling of demand.

    This demand was meant through the generosity of the community with monetary, clothing and food donations.

    Gifts of Love volunteer numbers were down, so made adjustments with existing staff to continue to provide necessary services

    DSS made adjustments to Senior Center activities, moving to more outdoor programming and supporting efforts to vaccinate Seniors

    Gifts of Love has been able to maintain the "Backpack" food program to 275 needy students in the Farmington Valley

    Foodbray Mobile Value provides means the over 100 monetage more values with the seniors of the Church Church

    - Foodshare Mobile Van provides meals to over 100 people every 2 weeks with volunteer help from members of First Church
- Private Schools (Westminster, Ethel Walker)
  - - Had a strong year of education through in-class teaching supported by extensive Covid testing

    - Competitive sports were cancelled due to COVID restrictions
      Applications broke records and student enrollment set a record of over 400 students
      Annual giving reached record levels through strong alumni and parent support
    - Annual giving reached record levels through 30.00 \_\_\_\_\_\_ All students and faculty must be vaccinated for this school year
    - Ethel Walker
    - Very challenging year, able to stay open all year with no Covid cases until late year cluster Required PPE loan to maintain full employment Teachers and students worked through the challenges difficulties to have a productive year

    - All students and faculty must be vaccinated for this school year
      Found support through strong community of like schools helping each other sharing ideas and information
  - Churches (Methodist Church, Covenant Presbyterian, Farmington Valley Jewish Congregational)
    - All stated it was a challenging year, had to make adjustments (i.e. Zoom services) but were able to work through the issues
    - All used PPE loans and membership financial support to effectively manage operations and budgets through out the year Able to maintain membership numbers
- Presbyterian Church leveraged outdoor setting and large indoor facility to provide more in-person services. While membership numbers were stable, the mix of member changed.
   Methodist Church went through a reflection of "what we do, why we dot it". They came out stronger in the end and feeling positive about the future.
  - Jewish Synagogue able to hold larger events with limitations. Feel they are coming out this difficult time stronger.

Marketing – Working with Dornenburg & Kallenbach Advertising, the team has completed the initial "fact-gathering" process to refresh the Marketing Brand message for the Town of Simsbury

- EDC Leads Sarah Nielson from SMSP with support from Brooke Freeman, Charmaine Seavy
- The goal of the initiative is to grow interest and awareness of Simsbury as an attractive place to visit, live, work and own a business

Key Findings presented to the Board of Selectmen on 08/09/21

- People appreciate Simsbury for the following characteristics
  - Small Town Vibe, Beauty, Public Schools, Outdoor activities, Safety
- Residence and visitors are able to take advantage of investments already made by the Town,
  - Hiking trails, Bike trail, Simsbury Farms, The Flower Bridge, the Library, the Simsbury Performing Arts Center
- Next Steps
  - Build out the marketing materials and messaging to support Realtors, Town Hall and Tourism
  - Provide consistent messaging across all media platforms, i.e. Website, brochures
  - Met with SPIRIT to determine if synergies between their marketing project and EDC project can be achieved

Draft

Supporting Entrepreneurs - The COVID crisis has created the opportunity to work with local businesses, the Chamber and the Library Business Resource Center to develop a Town approach to Co-working Space

- EDC Leads Morgan Hilyard (Chamber), Peter van Loon, Ron Jodice, Andrew Sherman
- <u>Definition.</u> A co-working space has some combination of individual office space, open office space, conference rooms and shared services (e.g. internet, scheduling, printing).
- <u>Background:</u> 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.
- 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.
- Working jointly with the Chamber, a website will be developed that will promote available office space in Simsbury for co-working. The concept is that through proper promotion, potential buyers will be able to view and negotiate for space with suitable Property Owner Sellers.
- In addition to the co-working website, we will partner with the Chamber on an update to our
  "Doing Business in Simsbury" resource, our development guide, and potentially a tourism map with
  local attractions that can be updated annually.

Going forward, the team will continue to work across organizations to implement current initiatives and identify new opportunities

- Implementation efforts
  - Complete the Marketing Brand "Refresh" study and implement the output
  - Build out the Co-working website
  - Continue business outreach
- New opportunities
  - What initiatives can be identified in working with the Spirit Council?
  - How can the EDC help with the Affordable Housing planning that has generated such interest town-wide?
  - How can we continue to identify creative ways to interact with our Business Leaders to maintain communications with Town Hall?
  - How can we continue to look for improvements in Town-wide processes that continue to make Simsbury a Town that is "Easy to Do Business"?



# Town of Simsbury

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## Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting Minutes - Draft

Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 5:30pm Held Virtually via Zoom

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Crowther at 5:32pm. Commission members Ron Jodice, Charmaine Seavy, and Brooke Freeman were present. Ex officio member Bill Rice (Planning Commission) was also present. Staff members in attendance included Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager, Tom Fitzgerald, Management Specialist, Mike Glidden, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Andrew "Sherm" Sherman, Business & Career Center Coordinator. Also in attendance was Morgan Hilyard, Executive Director of Simsbury Chamber of Commerce.

#### 1) 2020-2021 EDC Work Plan Updates

#### a) Marketing Project Update

Ms. Seavy informed the group that the marketing study was presented to the Board of Selectmen at their August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting and that it seemed to have been well received. She will follow up with the consultant for the next steps.

#### b) Co-working Spaces/Supporting Entrepreneurs

Ms. Appleby reported that the proposal for the co-working website is finalized but is on hold as the Board of Selectmen American Recue Plan Act Workgroup finalizes the process for using the funds. Staff believes that the co-working website, if approved, would be eligible for ARPA funding.

#### c) Other

Mr. Crowther informed the group that staff has scheduled a business outreach meeting for early September and that all EDC members will be contacted to see if they can attend.

#### 2) Stakeholder and Liaison Updates

#### a) Main Street Partnership

None

#### b) Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Hilyard said the Chamber is seeing a high rate of renewal for its members. The Chamber also is seeing a record amount of new businesses joining which is an encouraging sign. Ms. Hilyard informed the group of some upcoming Chamber

events. Mr. Crowther and Ms. Hilyard also reviewed the speakers scheduled to attend the upcoming Government Affairs Committee meetings.

#### c) Business & Career Center

Sherm said the Library continues to receive large amounts of requests for outside groups to use the large meeting rooms, but currently those meeting spaces are unavailable. The Library is switching to a new event calendar system shortly and staff is excited about it.

#### d) Zoning

Mr. Glidden reported that the Zoning Commission will be discussing recreational marijuana and accessory dwelling units at its next meeting.

#### e) Design Review

None

#### f) Sustainability

None

#### g) Development Projects

Mr. Crowther said that the proposed development on Iron Horse Boulevard received all of its local approvals. Mr. Glidden said that the next step is for the developer to apply for its state traffic and stormwater permits.

#### h) Other

None

#### 3) Housekeeping Items

#### a) EDC Vacancy Posting

Mr. Crowther asked the group if they had any feedback on the posting and to share with anyone they think would be interested in serving on the Commission. Ms. Appleby explained that due to our Charter requirements, the candidate must be of the same political party as the person who vacated the position mid-term; in this case, a Republican.

#### b) EDC Liaison to SPIRIT

Mr. Crowther said that this topic is a follow-up to the last meeting. He encouraged anyone interested in being the EDC Liaison to the SPIRIT Council to attend their September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### c) EDC 2020 – 2021 Annual Report Preparation

Mr. Crowther said that this is a draft outline for the annual report that the EDC gives to the Board of Selectmen every year. He asked for the group's feedback to see if anything needed to be added or changed. Hearing no feedback, Mr. Crowther said he will draft a presentation for next month's meeting for the group to review prior to it being presented to the Board of Selectmen in October.

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#### 4) Minutes July 28, 2021

Mr. Jodice made a motion to approve the minutes for the July 28, 2021 meeting as presented. Ms. Freeman seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Adjournment

Ms. Seavy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:57pm. Ms. Freeman seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Fitzgerald Management Specialist