



# Town of Burlington

## **MINUTES OF MEETING VIA ZOOM CONFERENCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)**

**MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2024, AT 7:00PM**

- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM. In attendance were Kevin Bair, Bryan Cassidy, Sharon Farmer, Vince Lambri, Judi Ann Lausier, JP Parente, and Tod Kallenbach.
- II. Public Comment: There were no members of the public in attendance.
- III. Review/Approve minutes of March 11 meeting: Motion to approve by Bair; seconded by Lambri; abstention by Cassidy due to not attending the meeting; unanimously approved.
- IV. Updates on business/property developments
  - a. Commercial/industrial property inquiries: Kallenbach provided an update on a follow up conversation with Daniel Dechamps, owner of MetalFinish, LCC regarding potentially relocating his business from Plainville to Burlington. Kallenbach discussed parcels on Monce Road, George Washington Turnpike (adjacent to Crescent Manufacturing), and Route 4 (adjacent to the old Johnnycake Mountain Meadow Airport). Kallenbach mentioned that Dechamps was only interested in the Monce Road lot; however, he was still pursuing opportunities in neighboring towns.

Lausier inquired about the status of 180 Stafford Avenue. Lambri mentioned that the Conservation Commission was looking to assist the Environment Learning Centers of Connecticut purchase the 6-acre lot to keep it undeveloped, as it is mostly a swamp located behind three homes.
- V. Updates on grant funding opportunities
  - a. Municipal/community websites development: Cassidy discussed that CivicPlus has a development site up and running which is being reviewed by the Website Design Committee. CivicPlus continues to migrate content over but remains on schedule to have the work completed. Kallenbach mentioned that he did not have any update regarding the events/business marketing website project being managed by Tricia

Twomey (Director of Parks & Recreation and Senior Citizen Services).

- b. Sidewalk extensions in Central Business Zone: Lambri mentioned the Town of Burlington continues to work with the CT Department of Transportation but are near moving forward on the project, based on his recent conversations with First Selectman Thompson.

VI. Updates on business support/events

- a. "How to start a business..." document: EDC members discussed the document that was prepared by Parente and agreed that it is a well put together document that is ready to be made available for individuals looking to start a business in the Town of Burlington.
- b. Burlington/Central Chambers, Northwest CT EDC, other co-presented activities/events: Farmer mentioned that the Burlington Chamber of Commerce is no longer interested in leading a "Taste of Burlington" effort; therefore, she has taken on the initiative of continuing discussions to determine if local businesses feel that it is a worthwhile initiative. Farmer discussed her proposed idea which involves using a passport card that is stamped at local participating restaurants and stores that sell food and beverages throughout the month of November. The passport would be free of charge and give customers a 10% discount. The passport can then be exchanged for entries into a drawing/raffle to win various prizes. Farmer shared a draft questionnaire she is currently working on that she is preparing to send to businesses as she wants the focus to be on what the businesses want to do. EDC members discussed the challenges and strategies in this effort, as well as laws pertaining to sweepstakes about not requiring a purchase at a participating business.

Kallenbach mentioned that he has had preliminary discussions with First Selectman Thompson to restore funding to the EDC to support initiatives. Lausier provided some high-level pricing from Taste of Bristol in which they printed 1,500 cards for approximately \$380.

Kallenbach and Bair both mentioned that they have no recent updates on the Northwest Connecticut Economic Development Council.

Lausier inquired if Greenhouse Market was no longer in business as the doors were closed and the shelves were empty during a recent visit she attempted. EDC members did not know the status of the business; however, the website does mention that they are currently on winter break. EDC members discussed the ongoing challenges of a business being successful in a rural town, using recent examples such as the change in ownership at Lemongrass Asian Grill and Evening Sky Brewery's crowdsourced fundraising to try and expand brewing operations.

VII. New Business

- a. Business fraud/cyber security seminar: Cassidy discussed that he is currently working with the Town of Burlington on potentially hosting a fraud/cyber seminar for businesses on behalf of the Economic Development Commission and sponsored by Torrington Savings Bank. EDC members discussed that this would be a great initiative to help showcase how the EDC is helping businesses.
- b. EDC members discussed moving the May 2024 meeting as Farmer and Lambri were unable to attend. A motion was made to move the May 13, 2024 meeting to May 20, 2024 at 7:00PM by Lambri; seconded by Lausier; all in favor.

VIII. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:11PM.

Respectfully submitted.

Bryan Cassidy, Secretary