



**Economic Development Commission**

**Branford, Connecticut**

## Meeting Minutes

**November 17, 2021 8:00am**

Joe Trapasso Community House - Church St – Branford

**Present:** Cathy Lezon (Chair), Jamie Cosgrove, Ellen Carucci (Shoreline Chamber) Dee Jacob (Shoreline Chamber), Perry Maresca (Staff),

**Via Zoom:** Rich Sgueglia, Al Canosa, Alisa Waterman, John Leonard

**Call to Order:** Chair Cathy Lezon called the meeting to order at 8:04am

**Approval of Minutes** October Minutes: Motion to accept by Al; second by Rich. Motion carried

### **Reports and unfinished business:**

*Staff Report:* \*Recent Town elections kept Jamie Cosgrove as our First Selectman, so we will continue to make strides in the plans that have been coming before his office and the EDC. \*Productive Meetings with Town Center Merchants Association \*Determining a more appropriate time for Tree Lighting/Parade \*Revitalizing the Sip, Shop & Stroll > Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, from 5p-8p. \*Branford Arts Council Association establishing a relationship with artists and town merchants to bring people into Branford and experiencing our Center. Working on additional methods to work with businesses and help address their concerns. \*Jamie, Perry, Dawn Hocevar of BioCt and Alisa Waterman (representing both EDC and BioScience companies). Availability of suitable Lab space major concern in the area, and ESPECIALLY Branford.

*Planning & Zoning:* For the next few weeks, the Town of Branford will be conducting a community survey about housing needs in Branford and possible housing strategies for the future <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HSQ2L53> \*Apartments at exit 55 have two buildings up and framed so far. \*Houses at Pond View Estates are almost all completed. \*New housing development at end of Cherry Hill Rd has come before P&Z. \*Aldi/Chase progressing. Amazon going through approval processes now. \*More businesses looking to grow and stay in town. Lack of available space is a hindrance. Consider REX come to a future meeting to discuss need for hotels in area. DEDC and AdvanceCT also of interest.

*Chamber:* Ellen Carucci noted that the Chamber has many new members. Gift Guide coordinating with Small Business Saturday is digitally available. 2022 Membership Guide is being distributed. Legislative Update on 10/28 was well attended. Senator Cohen, Reps Candelora, Scanlon and Comey all discussed programs and fielded questions. Celebrated Ribbon cutting on 10/20 for Gracious Gift & Home, 116 Montowese St, Business After Hours was held at Guilford Texaco. Net Walking event on Branford Green was a success. Holiday Party at Bill Millers on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

*Selectman's Report:* Sent letter to Senators Blumenthal and Murphy advising of our desire for funds to assist in dredging Branford's harbor/river. Dawn, Alisa, Perry and Jamie to meet again to discuss goals and ways of attracting and retaining businesses in the BioTech industry. Preliminary thoughts on upcoming budget considerations. Determining expedient ways of accumulating and maintaining list of businesses.

*Chairman's Report:* As newly seated Chair, Cathy Lezon stated that she was both honored and excited to take on these duties and responsibilities. She thanked outgoing Chair, Perry Maresca. \*Cathy stated her desire to focus on business retention and expansion, recognizing the need for support and attraction methods from Town Hall to all businesses. Strong advocate of workforce development and helping businesses w/ job seeking. 9 in 10 are struggling to find workforce for expansion. 41% of executives note the labor shortage as main obstacle for growth. She will coordinate with Branford High School to match students with businesses as part of their learning, job shadow, or intern needs. \*Government and DECD has grant money for certain business programs.

**Old Business:** Town Planner & EDC will discuss wayfinding options. \*Main Street overlay paving from Chestnut to Town Hall Drive is expected to start next week.

**New Business:** None that was not already discussed prior during this meeting.

*Public Comment:* Kate Galumbus noted that the wayfinding signs should consider "rail to trail" and similar signage. Expansion of any area should always have protecting the environment as a goal.

**Announcements:** Next Meeting = December 15, 2021

**Meeting adjourned @ 9:07am**

Respectfully submitted,

Perry Maresca

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**Perry Maresca · Economic and Business Development Manager**

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Elena Cahill · Al Canosa · John Leonard · Richard Sgueglia · Alisa Waterman  
First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove [ex officio]

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