



# Branford, Connecticut

## Economic Development Commission

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BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT

July 17, 2019 - Minutes

Present: A. Canosa, P. Indeck, J. Leonard, C. Lezon, P. Maresca, B. O'Brien, R. Sgueglia, L. Waterman, First Selectman J. Cosgrove, and T. Elton [staff]. Also attending were guests Dawn Hocevar and Kim Kelly from BioCT and Ken Waterman from FreeThink Technologies, Inc.

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair P. Maresca called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.; he then introduced and welcomed new EDC member Lisa Waterman, CFO at FreeThink Technologies, a Branford biotech.
- II. **Consent Agenda:** C. Lezon moved to accept the consent agenda and the June minutes as presented; seconded by R. Sgueglia, motion passed with one abstention.
- III. **External Reports**
  - A. **Selectman's Report** – The First Selectman advised the Community House is expected to be finished by the end of the summer, WIS's phase 1 will be ready in December for staff to move into its new offices, cafeteria and library; the Blackstone Library is halfway completed and is expected to be finished by the end of the year. He provided details on the newly formed economic development coalition with Durham, Guilford, Madison and North Branford; each town is contributing to an initial marketing effort by Miranda Consulting, with the Town of Madison serving a fiduciary role. B. O'Brien suggested that the 36 Branford servicemen who died during WWII be somehow commemorated at the new Community House.
  - B. **P&Z** – Applications submitted: special exception modification for [1] commercial/residential renovation to 119 Cedar, [2] wholesale food distributor at 50 E. Industrial Rd., and [3] modify landscaping at 880 W, Main St. Public hearing on July 11<sup>th</sup> heard a zoning regulation amendment of "non-agricultural farm events" and for a special exception for a warehouse at 8 sycamore Way. Staff summarized a discussion at P&Z regarding a proposed town center overlay district intended to encourage active street level uses and to discourage passive activity. EDC consensus supports changes in parking and other regulatory processes and would be helpful in keeping the town center a destination and vibrant. It was agreed to invite the town planner to the EDC's next meeting to further discuss the proposed overlay.
  - C. **Chamber** – R. Sgueglia reported that the Chamber's annual Lobster & Clambake will be held July 24<sup>th</sup> at Amarante's, a workshop maximizing Chamber membership will be held on July 25<sup>th</sup>, the Taste of the Shoreline will be held on September 7<sup>th</sup> on the Guilford green, and new members include Panera Bread.
  - D. **Chairman's update** – P. Maresca reported that the Trolley Museum will hold a second event for Branford leaders on Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup>; the July 16<sup>th</sup> tour of sema4 was impressive and very helpful as the commission begins work on a strategic plan for biotech recruitment and retention. BioCT's Dawn Hocevar invited all EDC members to tour Groton commons to better understand bio incubator space and its role in Branford as home to new biotechs. She, L. Waterman, C. Lezon and P. Indeck will meet before the September meeting to take the initial steps.
- IV. **Committee Reports and Unfinished Business**
  - A. **Research Committee:** Staff reported that efforts continue to complete the website.
  - B. **Resource Committee:** R. Sgueglia reported that he, the First Selectman and staff recently met with CT's broadband policy coordinator Bill Vallee for an update on the status of CT's broadband efforts. It was agreed that the EDC should remain in touch with GoNetSpeed and also invite CEN to a meeting in town hall to explore how best to utilize its infrastructure.
  - C. **Retention/Recruitment Committee:** The EDC's Business Recognition Award was presented to Ken Waterman of FreeThink Technologies, one of Branford's growing biotech companies.

**V. New Business. New/other business**

**A. New/other business:** BioCT's Dawn Hovevar and Kim Kelly led a discussion about the emerging biotech industry and how to capitalize on Branford's assets and success in recruiting and retaining new and expanding companies.

**B. Public Comment:** No public comment was offered.

**C. Announcements/Adjourn:** T. Elton was congratulated on his impending retirement and thanked for his service to the EDC and the Town. The next EDC meeting will be Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. With no further business, R. Sgueglia moved to adjourn; seconded by C. Lezon, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:39a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
T. Elton [recording secretary]