



# Branford, Connecticut

## Economic Development Commission

Minutes –February 15, 2016

Present: A. Canosa, J. Gordon, J. Leonard, C. Lezon, P. Maresca, B. O'Brien, R. Sgueglia, First Selectman Cosgrove, E. Lazarus [Chamber], guests J. Geballe and Anthony Uzzo from Core Informatics, Allison Jackman from Eversource, and T. Elton [staff].

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman P. Maresca called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
- II. **Consent Agenda:** A. Canosa moved, seconded by R. Sgueglia, to accept the consent agenda and the January minutes; motion passed unanimously.
- III. **External Reports**
  - A. **Selectman's Report** – the First Selectman advised the commission that he received a letter from Costco informing him that the company will not try again to put a store in Branford. While he is disappointed, he reminded everyone that Branford remains a desired location for a variety of businesses, including manufacturing and R&D. B. O'Brien asked if a public statement or response has been prepared. Following discussion, J. Gordon moved, seconded by A. Canosa, to prepare a public response that addresses any negative impact of the letter with a positive message; motion passed unanimously. Also, REX development is seeking financial support from its member towns to underwrite its participation in upcoming trade fairs, specifically the International Trade Fair in Hannover, Germany and the International Bio event in San Diego. He plans to propose to REX members that each town contribute 3¢ per capita in support of these efforts to cover the mid-year \$100,000.00 funding request.
  - B. **P&Z** – Staff reported P&Z approved a 3,000 s/f addition to 59 N. Harbor St., and a request to waive a public hearing on modifications to Hallock's new site on Cedar Street. P&Z also extended the hearing on Premier Subaru's application for 165 and 175 No. Main St., as well as extended by six months its moratorium on multi and 2--family development due to the POCD, set February 16<sup>th</sup> as the public hearing on Thimble Island Brewery's expansion application, and has received four responses to its RFP for the POCD and six for the TOD study; interviews will be February 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - C. **Chamber** – E. Lazarus reported that a follow up session is scheduled with the CT Tourism for workshop in March 8, it is launching a member-to-member program, and that it has a new app/business card.
  - D. **Chairman's update** – P. Maresca announced that the court found for the town on an appeal to P&Z's approval of Atlantic Wharf. He also announced that CERC will hold an economic development workshop in May designed for staff and commission members involved with land use. The EDC budget request is being prepared, and the First Selectman asks that budgets reflect initiatives vs. ongoing projects. B. O'Brien asked how the state budget will impact the town; a \$3 million decrease is expected due to ECS funds eliminated, \$600,000 cut from special ed, and \$2.7 million in pension contributions.
- IV. **Committee Reports and Unfinished Business**
  - A. **Research Committee:** A. Canosa offered an update on website research and recommended the EDC proceed with its request for funds to create a separate ED website as seen elsewhere, e.g., Hamden and cited Brookings, SD's website as a good example of functionality and visual appeal. It was agreed that funds will be requested again in the upcoming budget and that it will be designed to account for SEO, multi pages of data, and a video component. C. Lezon moved, seconded by A. Canosa, to meet with BCTV determine its estimated costs for video production; motion carried.

IV. **Committee Reports and Unfinished Business**

**B. Resource Committee:** R. Sgueglia reported, following the commission's and First Selectman's decision in January to take the step with Axia, staff is pursuing consensus with Guilford and Madison in order to provide the company with a broad enough customer base to begin its analysis.

**C. Retention/Recruitment Committee:** Core Informatics CEO Josh Geballe and President / co-founder Anthony Uzzo were presented with the EDC's Business Recognition Award by the First Selectman and chairman P. Maresca. Discussion followed on Core's growth to 100 employees and plans to double its workforce, finding needed talent from "CT's eco system", the importance of Branford's quality of life, and emphasized the need for better broadband service and better school curriculum development on coding, software engineering and in science.

V. **New Business**

**A. New Business** – C. Lezon introduced Allison Jackman, Eversource Energy's contact for Clean Energy Communities and Energy Efficiency.

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

**C. Announcements/Adjourn:** The next EDC meeting will be Wednesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. With no further business, A. Canosa moved to adjourn; seconded by B. O'Brien, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Elton [recording secretary]