



Branford, Connecticut

Economic Development Commission

Minutes – January 18, 2016

Present: A. Canosa, J. Gordon, P. Indeck, J. Leonard, C. Lezon, P. Maresca, B. O'Brien, R. Sgueglia, First Selectman Cosgrove, Town Planner Harry Smith, and T. Elton.

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman P. Maresca called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m.
- II. **Consent Agenda:** C. Lezon moved, seconded by J. Gordon, to accept the consent agenda and the December minutes; motion passed unanimously.
- III. **External Reports**
 - A. **Selectman's Report** – the First Selectman met with C. Lezon and staff on the business directory.
 - B. **P&Z** – Staff reported P&Z approvals of a 8,200 sf expansion at CT Orthopedics [84 N. Main St.] and for a martial arts/fitness center at 972 W. Main St. A public hearing for Premier Subaru/Kia on N. Main St. is rescheduled for Feb. 2nd. REX Development's brownfield committee met Dec. 22nd and voted to submit the EPA application for remediation funds for the Atlantic Wire site on Meadow St.
 - C. **Chamber** – R. Sgueglia reported that the Chamber's annual meeting and awards dinner will be January 26th at Stony Creek Brewery, that its "Net 90" sessions consistently have 50 or more participants, the non-profit workshop series continues to be a success, and that membership is holding steady.
 - D. **Chairman's update** – P. Maresca cited an article on North Branford's recent business breakfast and its five year assessment deferral program for commercial buildings with capital improvements. While such a program has been discussed in the past, he asks the commission to revisit the issue to determine its feasibility in Branford. He then initiated discussion on Axia's broadband development to follow up on the EDC's previous vote to ask the town to move forward with the company's proposal. Discussion followed with input from the First Selectman, focusing on service delivery, target of 30,000 premises and the needed threshold for interest, pricing structure, the town's role in assisting the company's feasibility study, and the interest of neighboring towns to participate. The First Selectman then asked P. Maresca to have the EDC contact Axia representatives and take the next step towards determining if and to include neighboring town officials who are interest in participating. Staff will follow up accordingly.
- IV. **Committee Reports and Unfinished Business**
 - A. **Research Committee:** A. Canosa reported efforts continue to meet with IT on improvements to the website under the existing system and which may need an outside vendor. It was suggested the same budget request be anticipated for the FY 17-18 budget.
 - B. **Resource Committee:** R. Sgueglia reported that in addition to the Axia developments, North Branford recently inquired about the status of the state's broadband efforts. It was suggested that staff contact town officials to advise them of our plans and to include them if there is interest.
 - C. **Retention/Recruitment Committee:** C. Lezon circulated a draft of a new "Branford Business Handbook & Directory for review and comment. The directory is intended as a resource for new and expanding businesses and can be adapted as a recruitment tool. She also circulated a list of companies suggested to be part of quarterly site visits by the EDC as a way for it to better understand and appreciate the town's diverse industrial base.
- V. **New Business**
 - A. **New Business** – J. Gordon asked if Guilford's rejection of the Greenway Trail on Rte. 1 will impact Branford. J. Cosgrove explained it would not and that the Town will move forward with its trail through the Tabor property. B. O'Brien acknowledged the recent passing long-time EDC member Ed Johnson.
 - B. **Demolition Application** – There were no objections to the demolition of 57 Sound View Heights.
 - C. **Public Comment:** No comments were offered.
 - D. **Announcements/Adjourn:** The next EDC meeting will be Wednesday, February 15th and will include the award presentation to Core Informatics. With no further business, A. Canosa moved to adjourn; seconded by J. Gordon, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:26 am.

Respectfully submitted,
T. Elton [recording secretary]