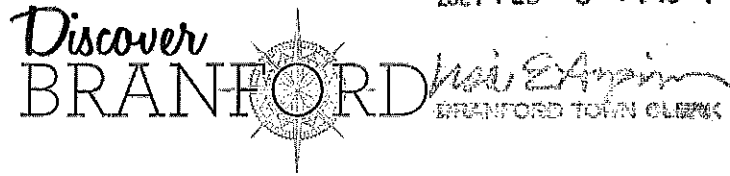


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Economic Development Commission

Branford, Connecticut

MINUTES from **January 3, 2024** held at Joe Trapasso Community House - 46 Church St – Branford

Meeting was called to order at 8:05am Present were Commission Members: R.Squeglia (Chair), E.Cahill, A.Canosa, J.Fennell, F.Hird, J.Schulefand, First Selectman James Cosgrove, and Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President Dee Jacobs. Guest Speakers Ginny Kozlowski and Barbara Malmberg of REX Development, and Dale Kroop of SCRCOG.

Motion to approve the December Minutes was made by A. Canosa and seconded by F.Hird. The Motion carried.

Staff Report: P. Maresca noted that the annual Shop, Sip, and Stroll held on 12/7 was very successful. More businesses participated, many for the first time. Others reported dramatic increases over last year with sales up 25% to 50%. As a follow-up a winter Indoor Sidewalk Sale is planned for January. BACA's "Decorated Trees" was capped off with the successful Artisans' Event held at the old post office / Board of Ed building.

Planning & Zoning Report: Cherry Hill Estates (26 Cherry Hill Rd) application was withdrawn and will reapply in near future. A new kitchen design and cabinet showroom planned for 1032 Main St was approved. A gym proposal for 249-251 West Main St was approved. P&Z held a special meeting on 12/14 to discuss Zoning Regulations "list of issues" and other concerns for possible amendments. Follow-up will be at future meetings

Shoreline Chamber of Commerce Report: D Jacobs, President, reported the successful events including the Holiday BAsH with 140 attendees, the Shop, Sip & Stroll illuminated with luminarias; ad campaigns supporting local businesses including Shop Local, Shop Home along with the electronic Gift Guide. GSB also ran a campaigns in conjunction with local chambers promoting local business. Cindi Bigelow will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Awards Breakfast being held on February 22nd at Woodwinds. In March, a Non-Profit Conference will be held in support of the 90 non-profits in the area.

First Selectman James Cosgrove advised the commission that this is the last year for ARPA Funds. The 1.6 million available must be appropriated by December 31, 2024. Some towns have been able to promote property enhancement through building façade improvements as one possible use of the funds.

Old Business: The Retention & Expansion, Marketing & Branding, and Workforce Development subcommittees will be meeting independently in January to prepare strategies for the upcoming year.

New Business: There were no Demolition Applications or other correspondence in the mail as of January 2nd. Guest Speaker D.Kroop explained how, with a grant through SCRCOG, he is working with EDCs in the region to share experiences and strategies. He will return at future EDC meetings with additional, more specific thoughts and ideas. Guest Speakers G.Kozolowski and B.Malmberg presented the 2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy from REX. Some key points include how population, age, median income, and house prices are all much higher than 5 years ago in 2019 (pre-Covid). The ongoing demand for available workforce is a focus.

Meeting was adjourned after a motion by A. Canosa and seconded by J.Fennell.
Next Regular Meeting to be held on Feb 7th, 2024.

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Elena Cahill · Al Canosa · Jim Fennell · Frank Hird · Karen Ragonese · Jared Schulefand ·
First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove [ex officio]

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