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Economic Development Commission Branford, Connecticut

MINUTES from **February 7, 2024** held at Joe Trapasso Community House - 46 Church St – Branford

Meeting was called to order at 8:06am Present were Commission Members: R.Squegla (Chair), A.Canosa, J.Fennell, F.Hird, K.Ragonese, First Selectman James Cosgrove, and Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President Dee Jacobs. Guest Speaker: Dale Kroop from REX.

Motion to approve the January Minutes was made by A.Canosa and seconded by J.Fennell. The Motion carried.

A Motion was made by F.Hird, and seconded by A.Canosa to change the order of the Agenda to have Guest Speaker Kroop speak prior to the other reports and business scheduled. Motion carried.

Mr.Kroop gave a detailed presentation on the importance of a strong, engaged Economic Development Commission. Recognized Branford as having such by the individuals on the Commission, as well as the direction it strives for. The slides will be forwarded to the Commission to use for further projects and procedures.

Staff Report: P.Maresca noted that a major goal of SCRCOG's Priority Climate Action Plan is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while focusing on disadvantaged communities. Also SCRCOG's DEEP/Remediation Site Clean-Up Plan will be designed to be more in sync with most of the other States. Rt 146 Corridor study continues to move forward. Branford is once again being sought as a backdrop for movie scenes with new inquiry for filming on the Thimble Islands.

Planning & Zoning Report: 242 unit Incentive Housing Zone Development is being considered for 250 North Main St. Used Car Dealership is planned for 544-558 West Main St. Application to develop the old movie theatre site is expected at a future P&Z meeting.

Shoreline Chamber of Commerce Report: D Jacobs, President, announced that Cindi Bigelow will be the Keynote Speaker at the Annual Excellence Awards Breakfast being held on February 22nd at Woodwinds. Branford's Legacy Theatre and The Parthenon are two of the recipients being honored that Thursday. Conference for Non-Profits with Dr Judith Myers former CEO of The Children's Fund speaking. Net 90 will be at the Holiday Inn Express an evening in March. Anticipate three Legislative Update meetings through the 2024 session. Those held in 2023 were highly attended and deemed beneficial. Two of the Bills being considered in the State of CT are a concern for the Chamber. One is the Paid PTO regardless of the size of the business. The other is eliminating the Tip Credit for service and bartenders at restaurants.

First Selectman James Cosgrove advised the commission that the BOF approved Police Dept renovations and the Sports Fields project at WIS. The Main Street revitalization is intended to be start again shortly with hopes of limiting the disruption to townspeople and businesses. Sidewalk space and crosswalks are getting revamped. Main Street will be repaved. Just awaiting the State of CT to give us the ability to advertise for contractor bids. SCRCOG is working with us on it. Some of the dredging may be getting pushed out to 2027. He spoke with them and was advised that the Army Corp of Engineers is scheduled for 2025-2026. Dept of Agriculture is reclassifying shellfish beds throughout Branford. Could dramatically change existing activity.

Old Business: The Retention & Expansion met on January 21st and discussed updating an existing businesses list with a plan to schedule site visits as well as Recognition Awards and publicizing the types of businesses in town. Marketing & Attraction met on three occasions and developed a cohesive marketing plan that will also be beneficial to the needs of the Retention and Workforce subcommittees.

New Business: There were no Demolition Applications or other correspondence in the mail as of February 6th.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:10am after a motion by A.Canosa and seconded by K.Ragonese. Next Regular Meeting to be held on **March 6th, 2024.**

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Perry Maresca • Economic and Business Development Manager

Richard Squegla (Chair) edc@branford-ct.gov Elena Cahill • Al Canosa • Jim Fennell • Frank Hird • Karen Ragonese • Jared Schulefand •
First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove [ex officio]

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