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BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Economic Development Commission

Branford, Connecticut

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

Meeting was called to order at 8:04am Commission Members present: R.Squeglia (Chair), A.Canosa, S.Fainstein, J.Fennell, F.Hird, Karen Ragonese, Jared Schulefand, First Selectman J.Cosgrove, Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President Dee Jacob, and Perry Maresca (Staff). Chair R.Squeglia started the meeting by introducing new Commission member Susan Fainstein.

Motion to approve the March Minutes was made by A.Canosa and seconded by K.Ragonese. Unanimous approval.

Staff Report: P.Maresca advised that he and Chair R.Squeglia will present the EDC's 2024-2025 budget request of \$23,550 to the RTM Rules & Ordinances Committee on April 16th. State of CT real gross domestic product grew during the 4th Qtr of 2023 at an annual rate of 3.1% and the national uptick was 3.4%. Branford continues to draw independent movie productions as one wrapped up in March and another is scheduled to start in June. Cutting edge developer/manufacturer from India is establishing a US division, headquartered in Branford which supplies EV charging stations that give full battery recharge in 15 minutes. SB277 to restore full service to Shore Line East rail service was referred to the Office of Legislative Research and Office of Fiscal Analysis for discussion. Author Book Signing event being held on May 1st.

Planning & Zoning Report: Two applications before P&Z have been continued to the April 4th meeting. Master plan PDD being submitted to develop the old movie theater site on East Main St. Large medical facility looking for suitable sites in Branford. Manufacturing facility looking for approximately 30,000sq' with 20' ceilings.

Shoreline Chamber of Commerce: Dee Jacob spoke of the chamber's March E-Mag issue as well as their directory in E-Format. Their Conference for Non-Profits was sold-out. Net-90 event, hosted by Holiday Inn Express was also extremely well attended. She went on to state how impressive all the updated improvements were at the facility. Has been holding many ribbon cuttings of new businesses, but has concerns for many other small businesses with rent amount and lease terms, as well as workforce becoming an issue. Working to schedule legislature forums in Guilford, and in Branford with legislators, retailers, restaurants, and town officials to discuss damaging Bills and other factors.

Selectman's Report: Jamie Cosgrove noted that the full budget has gone from the Board of Finance to the RTM with desire to be adopted by the second week of May, projected at just under a 2.6% mil rate increase. Nearly 9% of budget goes to fund capital projects. Post-employment benefits for police and volunteer firefighters are part of the proposal. Additional responders, fleet, and equipment are planned to help satisfy the needs of the townspeople. As such, also creating and funding an EMT division within this budget. A.Canosa noted that year after year, our consistently receiving Moody's AAA Bond Rating, while averaging a 1% budget increase over the last decade, is very beneficial as the EDC promotes the Town of Branford.

Old Business: Chairman Rich Squeglia confirmed that the Retention & Expansion, Marketing & Branding, and Workforce Development subcommittees continue to work towards their goals as the EDC strives to assist the Branford business community.

New Business: The First Selectman explained that we are awaiting final stage of review from the State of CT before we can put the Main St repave and sidewalk repair out to bid. Discussion from members about possibility of most construction happening during off hours. Anticipate to commence in the fall. Efforts are being put in place to assure establishments and their customers are inconvenienced as little as possible. There were no objections to the two demolition applications (21 Sunset Beach Rd and 32 Wood Rd). No additional correspondence or public comment. F.Hird has been on panel reviewing the Transfer Act for a number of years. DEEP has worked with brokers in an effort to refine and get to the State by the end of the summer in time for the 2025 session. If implemented, will put CT on level playing field with the other 49 states. Should expedite process of selling properties.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:03am after a motion by J.Fennell and seconded by A.Canosa.
Next Regular Meeting to be held on **May 1st, 2024**.

<https://www.bestcitiesforbusiness.net>

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Perry Maresca • Economic and Business Development Manager

Richard Squeglia (Chair) • Elena Cahill • Al Canosa • Susan Fainstein • Jim Fennell • Frank Hird • Karen Ragonese • Jared Schulefand
First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove [ex officio]

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