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BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

## Economic Development Commission

## Branford, Connecticut

MINUTES from: **January 8, 2025** held at Branford Town Hall - 1019 Main St - Branford

**Meeting was called to order at 8:04am.** Present were Commission Members: R.Squeglia (Chair), E. Cahill, A.Canosa, J.Fennell, F.Hird, K.Ragonese, Jared Schulefand, Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President Dee Jacob, Dale Kroop from REX, and Perry Maresca (Staff), David Fink from South Central Regional Council of Governments as guest speaker.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to accept December Minutes by F.Hird, seconded by A.Canosa, passed unanimously.

**Staff Report:** P.Maresca- The annual Shop, Sip & Stroll was very successful. Many businesses reported sales far exceeded previous year. The Tasty Yoke opened on Main St. Domino's opened on West Main St. The new Lockworks Square owners continue to clean and improve the site. Quantum-Si offered 15,625,000 shares as they secure \$50million to support growth. Reconstruction of Main Street and Town Green expected to start this spring.

**Planning & Zoning Report:** P.Maresca- [P&Z] 2024 ended with recording of Regency Theater property on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Mostly residences were on the agenda for their December meetings. However, many projects anticipated for upcoming meetings.

**Commissioners' Comments:** BioCubics and FirstXFounders have brought the ABCT 2025 Cohorts to Branford and will meet four days this month. Two at Community House, two at Town Hall, with presentation at Blackstone Library the afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Shoreline Chamber of Commerce:** D.Jacob: new logo expressing "Three Great Towns, On Strong Business Community" as they promote Branford, Guilford and North Branford. Online searches over 500,000 for 2024 driving people to our businesses. Tina Strell has been hired as VP and Diane Lefeete as Operations Manager. February 13<sup>th</sup> is Annual Excellence & Awards Meeting at Woodwinds with State Comptroller, Sean Scanlon as guest speaker. GreyGoat Farmtique, Cancion Tequila, Branford CoWorking, are some of this year's recipients.

**Selectman's Report:** Jamie Cosgrove- No report

**Old Business:** - A.Canosa **Attraction Subcommittee** – EDC's social media campaign continues to grow with 200% more followers than similar towns. F.Hird **Retention Subcommittee** – Setting up meeting with Blakeslee Prestress before end of the month.

**Guest Speaker:** Dave Fink, SCRGOG – Housing in Connecticut. 7<sup>th</sup> highest median monthly housing cost in the nation. Home prices have risen 60% from 2019-2023 and 2024 showing an addition 10% increase. Rental prices are up 20% and homelessness has risen 13%. Housing is the largest expense for most households at 32% of income. An affordable home is one that needs no more than 30% of monthly income (including rent or mortgage payments and utilities). Some of the benefits of income-restricted units: Increase property tax revenues; Increased labor pool and customers for merchants; Allow seniors to remain in town they love; Adult children to return to the town they grew up in; Teachers, public safety, child care workers and others to live in town.

### **New Business:**

Demolition applications for 14 Forest St and 294 Pine Orchard Rd received no objections. There was no other correspondence nor public comment.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:16am after a motion by J.Fennell and seconded by A.Canosa. Next Regular Meeting to be held on **February 5th, 2025** at the lower level conference room of Town Hall.

Perry Maresca  
Economic and Business Development Manager  
**475-837-3622** [pmaresca@branford-ct.gov](mailto:pmaresca@branford-ct.gov)

Richard Squeglia (Chair) · Elena Cahill · Al Canosa · Jim Fennell · Frank Hird · Karen Ragonese · Jared Schulefand  
First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove [ex officio]  
Branford Economic Development Commission - 1019 Main Street - Branford, CT 06405 - 203-315-0637 <https://www.bestcitiesforbusiness.net>