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BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

Economic Development Commission

Branford, Connecticut

MINUTES from: **February 5, 2025** held at the Branford Town Hall - 1019 Main St

Meeting was called to order at 8:02am. Present were Commission Members: R.Squeglia (Chair), A.Canosa, J.Fennell, F.Hird, J.Schulefand, First Selectman James Cosgrove, Shoreline Chamber of Commerce President Dee Jacob, Dale Kroop of REX, and Perry Maresca (Staff), Barbara Malmberg from REX was guest speaker.

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

Staff Report: P.Maresca- Town Center Merchants are being kept abreast of the anticipated timeline of Main Street & Town Green reconstruction. All normal activities are still planned and will adjust accordingly. Branford Festival will be held on Hammer Field this year. Friends of Blackstone Library looking for place to hold annual Book Sale in September. Staff and Town Hall are helping to secure a location. The Oxford restaurant on East Main St has opened. Branford Biomedical Manufacturing Cluster failed to make the cut for DECD Grant. Three finalists were all larger projects directly related to universities and within city footprints (Yale/UCONN). Governor Lamont spoke at BioCT annual meeting last week and expressed his desire to increase the state's R&D tax credit from 60% to 90% in the upcoming budget. He noted that a lot of new start-ups of life sciences are in the New Haven region, and the tax credit helps them make the investments they need to make sure CT is at the forefront.

Planning & Zoning Report: P.Maresca- **[IWWA]** Application for an aged restricted housing development on Beacon Hill is still before the wetlands commission. **[P&Z]** Public hearing for Zoning Regulation #24-12.1 was opened and continued to Feb 6th meeting. A four unit, 20,000 square foot flex building for general office or construction use was approved for 5 Pine Oak Drive. General business/office space was approved for 257&261 East Main St.

Shoreline Chamber of Commerce: January saw many new members. The Coder School, Gentiva Hospice, Domino's, Home, and Longley's are all new members. Pi Restaurant Consulting has also recently joined the Chamber. Social media is a major part of the Chamber's growing exposure. SCC Annual Awards Breakfast to be held Feb 13th at Woodwinds. Branford Honorees are... New Business of the Year: Grey Goat Farmtique; Our Community Partner: Branford CoWorking; and the Small Business of the Year: Cancion Ultra-Premium Tequila. Comptroller Sean Scanlon will be the Keynote Speaker. Holding a Restaurant Week in Branford was brought up for future consideration and discussion. Two networking events were held in Branford over the past month. One at Marathon Sports and the other at Harbor Chase. Two Ribbon Cuttings: Jackie & Trinity's Nail Nook at the Salon Suites, as well as Domino's Pizza. Both businesses are located along West Main Street.

Selectman's Report: Jamie Cosgrove- Revaluation has been completed and submitted to the State of CT. Very healthy growth for the Town as home values increased dramatically. Commercial property values went up 25% year over year. Personal property rose by 4.3% however, Branford businesses will likely see an overall reduction in tax amount liability this year. Received notice from the State of CT granting permission to go out to bid for the reconstruction of Main Street project. Lane closures, detours, and interruption will occur as pavement, crosswalks, and sidewalks will all be replaced. Close communication and direction with contractor will be major goal in an effort to minimize disruption for businesses, residents, and general public.

Old Business: - Subcommittee Reports: Attraction - Social media campaign has grown over 200% which is well above other towns. **Retention:** Visit to Blakeslee Prestress was very informative and gave the group ideas of how we can help them continue to prosper in the Town of Branford.

Guest Speaker: Barbara Malmberg from REX gave an update on the 2025 Comprehensive Regional Development Strategy. Data and reports from region get collected to assist in plans and goals that can benefit the individual municipalities and region as a whole. Workforce in the region continues to grow. Unemployment is very low. CT is less than national average. Unemployment in the New Haven area is lower than the State of CT and the unemployment rate in Branford is even lower than that. Housing continues to be needed. Manufacturing continues to grow in the region. BioScience continues to do very well here with the region continuing to lead as a BioTech center for the State. Entrepreneurship in Branford at 21% growth (post pandemic) exceeds the State of CT's growth. Tweed New Haven Airport continues to grow and the area is benefitting from that growth. New and expanding companies may have ability to receive temporary economic development rates on some utilities.

New Business:

There were no Demolition Applications and no correspondence nor public comment.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:27am after a motion by A.Canosa and seconded by F.Hird.

Next Regular Meeting to be held on **March 5th, 2025** at the lower level conference room of Town Hall.

Perry Maresca
Economic and Business Development Manager
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Richard Sgueglla (Chair) • Elena Cahill • Al Canosa • Jim Fennell • Frank Hird • Karen Ragonese • Jared Schulefand
First Selectman Jamie Cosgrove (ex officio)
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