

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
EAST GRANBY, CONNECTICUT
September 26, 2022 Meeting**

Minutes

A meeting of the East Granby Economic Development Commission was held on Monday, September 26, 2022. Members present when Vice Chairman David Iannucci called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM were Oliver Davis, Tom Lally, and Paul Oliva and alternate member Dan Barrett.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Paul Oliva and seconded by Oliver Davis to approve the minutes of August 22, 2022. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION WITH PUBLIC AND/OR APPLICANT

None.

COMMUNICATIONS

- EDC Meeting Minutes for August 2022
- EDC Activity Report 9/9/2022

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Sandra Johnson reported that the request for the text amendment by the Silverman Group was not approved at Thursday's Planning and Zoning meeting.

Laura Hall noted that the applicant for 10 Connecticut South Drive has withdrawn their application to the Inland Wetlands Commission. The prospective tenant for whom the owner was intending to build is no longer interested. The owner plans to sell the property and the new buyer will be submitting a new application at a later date.

Paul Oliva reported that the regulation change for cannabis establishments has been sent to CRCOG for their review. The public hearing for the new regulation to allow cannabis uses in Commerce Park B will be held in October.

Sandra Johnson stated that 1 Gateway Boulevard has an application to be heard in October to change the zone of the property to the Commerce Park Transitional Zone. Ms. Johnson noted that the developer is considering retail development in this area. Paul Oliva commented that the Commerce Park Transitional Zone allows additional uses beyond those in Commerce Park A, including restaurants. He wondered if there were limitations in the zoning regulations that prohibit fast food establishments. Ms. Johnson stated that another possible option for the site would be an industrial building, but that the options of the Commerce Park Transitional Zone are more appropriate for the site's frontage on Route 20. David Iannucci mentioned that some towns do have regulations regarding drive-thru windows.

Sandra Johnson also reported that Connecticut Stone on Airport Park Road is exploring the leasing of their space, either office area or the warehouse or both. Ms. Johnson has referred them to someone to assist with this process.

Ms. Johnson also reported that there have been some engineering meetings related to the two Wilson properties on East Street.

Regarding additional communication to the Commission, Oliver Davis commented on an e-mail sent by former EDC member Lee Sandora to him, Paul Thulen, and Paul Oliva after the zoning text change application was not approved. Mr. Sandora's message suggested reaching out to other manufacturers in town, such as Joining Technologies, Rockbestos, etc. as possible tenants for one of the 300,000 to 400,000 SF buildings planned by the Silverman Group. Sandra Johnson mentioned that she copied Commission members on her note to the Silverman Group after the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Brokers/Realtors & Available Sites/Buildings

Discussed with the Economic Development Report.

B. Village Center Concept Master Plan

Tom Lally reported that the deadline for proposals was extended to the end of the month. One additional proposal has been received, bringing the total submitted to four.

C. Business Visitation and Retention

Paul Oliva visited with the new optician in town, who held a successful grand opening on Saturday after working closely with the Bradley Regional Chamber of Commerce. Articles about the business were placed in "Let's Talk Turkey" at the time of their soft opening. With their opening, Mr. Oliva reported that there is now only one small area in the East Street Shops complex that is still available. He has spoken to the owner of the plaza regarding the sale of the Wilson properties across the street.

Paul Oliva also reported on the closing of the Spoonville Deli Mart, which operated for only two months. Despite positive reactions to their offerings, they did not receive enough business to support their operation.

D. Marketing – Articles (Business Spotlight, Etc.)

With no additional new small businesses opening in town, Paul Oliva does not have any articles planned for the next edition of "Let's Talk Turkey." However, he noted that Eden Wimpfheimer and Tammy Zawistowski visited the new manufacturing company on Connecticut South Drive. David Iannucci will submit the regular EDC content to "Let's Talk Turkey" for next month, minus the "Small Business Spotlight" section.

Tom Lally asked whether the Commission has ever reached out to Trader Joe's or Aldi's. It was noted that East Granby does not meet their demographic requirements and/or that these establishments prefer to be located in plazas rather than in stand-alone sites. An increase in residential properties may help to make the town more desirable for this type of development, but this will be a long-term process. Sandra

Johnson also stated that conversations also regularly take place with the Bradley Development League to stay up to date with potential development opportunities in the area. Paul Oliva commented that once the new apartment communities are constructed on the Wilson properties, Nicholson Road, School Street, and on the Silverman property, the center of town will shift slightly to the east closer to the Route 20 Plaza and the East Street Shops. The Village Center study will help to provide direction during these changes. Community input will be incorporated. Once a plan has been defined and approved, State assistance with funding will be sought through STEAP grants.

E. Incentives and Regulation Changes, Façade Improvement

Adam Tkaczuk will refine the incentives application and send it to Commission members.

For the Façade Improvement Program, two financial incentive options have been previously discussed. One is to waive or reduce the permit fees for work to be completed. The other is to reduce the property tax increase incurred as a result of the improvements. Neither of these options would provide a substantial incentive to property owners. Another option is to reduce property taxes in proportion to the cost of work completed for a period of time. The reduction would be capped in two ways: a maximum dollar value over a five-year period, and a maximum percentage of what was invested for the improvements. The incentive would be temporary and only applicable to the Village Center Zone. Tom Lally stated that the incentive might only be attractive to a property owner already planning on improvements due to the expense of upgrades. David Iannucci proposed categorizing improvements: façade, fit-out, driveway, signage, etc. Sandra Johnson suggested that the Village Center Plan should be in place prior to the incentive program so that improvements will reflect the aspects decided upon in the plan. Further discussion centered around speaking with individual property owners to determine their wants to better tailor effective incentives. It was decided that the Commission's efforts at this time would be to focus on the incentives already in place rather than developing a façade improvement program concurrently.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by David Iannucci and seconded by Tom Lally to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 PM. Votes in favor were unanimous. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hall
Building and Land Use Administrative Assistant