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6 **Economic Development Commission**  
7 **Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes**  
8 **February 1, 2021**  
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11 **Present:** Joe Mirra, Chair  
12 Hank Baum, Commissioner  
13 Patricia Cymbala, Commissioner  
14 Gary Fappiano, Commissioner  
15 Rosemarie Preneta, Commissioner \*  
16 Jim Wolfe, Commissioner  
17 Rob Fritz, Alternate/Voting Member  
18

19 **Absent:** Mark Gingras, Vice-Chair  
20 Anthony Bracale, Alternate  
21

22 **Others Present:** Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist  
23 Lynn Wolff, Secretary  
24 Kathy Lilley, Exec. Dir., WCI  
25

26 Chair Joe Mirra called the regular virtual meeting of the Economic Development Commission to  
27 order at 6:32 p.m. and asked Alternate Fritz to serve as a voting member. Chair Mirra explained  
28 how the EDC would conduct the virtual meeting.  
29

- 30 1. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Chair Mirra led the EDC in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
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32 2. **Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Virtual Meeting Minutes dated January 4, 2021**  
33 – Jim Wolfe made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Rob Fritz seconded the  
34 motion. By a unanimous vote, the motion carried.  
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36 3. **Review of monthly Expenditure Report** – No questions on the December report.  
37  
38 4. **Committee remarks**  
39 • **Marketing**  
40 ➤ **Update on committee activities** – Patricia Cymbala reported that the Quinnipiac  
41 Student Marketing Teams (SMT) are working hard to launch the digital marketing  
42 program, which includes social media campaigns and reworking the EDC landing

43 page on the website to mesh with Social Media. Patricia feels we've gotten more  
44 than our money's worth as they've all done a great job.

45 Rob Fritz agreed, saying they've put in a tremendous amount of effort and  
46 have far exceed any expectations we had.

47 Tim Ryan told the EDC that the LinkedIn page is now live and encouraged  
48 EDC members to connect to it. The target areas are New England, New York,  
49 New Jersey and Pennsylvania and we're now working to build a somewhat  
50 targeted audience through LinkedIn's Site Navigator tool. Regarding the email  
51 campaign, one e-blast has been sent out already. The Facebook page has been  
52 put on hold, until further research is done. Tim is concerned, if comments must be  
53 allowed, will we be able to properly monitor and deal with them. Joe Mirra said  
54 that if people have a comment to make they should do so at our monthly  
55 meetings; he would like to keep it that way. Joe told the Marketing Committee  
56 that they are doing a great job with this new marketing initiative. Tim has a  
57 meeting on Tuesday with the QU students working on this area of the campaign  
58 and will report back next month. In addition, the College Outreach "channel"  
59 (whose focus is on connecting businesses to College Placement offices) has sent  
60 out two messages to date; the updates to the EDC webpage should be completed  
61 soon; and after other Social Media channels are up and running, the Instagram  
62 channel will be worked on. Although some messages are already planned, Tim  
63 asked the EDC to let him know if they have any ideas to post.

64 Gary Fapianno said he's looked at the LinkedIn EDC page and was  
65 impressed. He suggested linking to the two videos since they are so well done.

66 ➤ **Next meeting:** None scheduled.

67 • **P&Z Liaison**

68 ➤ **Update on committee activities** – Jim Wolfe thanked the Commissioners and  
69 staff who participated in the last Town Council meeting, especially since  
70 discussion on the item on Town Center parking lot improvements was involved  
71 and the meeting long.

72 Hank Baum informed the Commissioners not able to attend the Council  
73 meeting that funding was approved for improvements to both the Wallace Avenue  
74 parking lot and the rear Simpson Court parking lot.

75 Joe Mirra feels that improving those lots will be a great addition to our Town  
76 Center and improve the perception that people who live outside our area and

77 state have of our Town. He complimented the Downtown Group and WCI for the  
78 great presentation. Kathleen Lilley said it was a team effort.

79 Tim Ryan agreed that perception of our Town is important. He related a story  
80 about a West Coast investor who came to Wallingford because his child was  
81 attending Choate. The investor liked the Town so much that he has now  
82 purchased a building at 135 North Plains Industrial Road.

83 ➤ **Next meeting:** No meeting set.

84 • **Retention/Incentives**

85 ➤ **Report on committee activities** – Gary Fappiano said the Committee met at the  
86 end of January. At the meeting, Tim reported on some “uptown” projects that are  
87 still in the works and on some State business relief programs that the Committee  
88 found enlightening. Right now work on the exit interviews is curtailed but the  
89 Committee will get back to those at a later date.

90 ➤ **Next meeting:** February 25 at 9 a.m.

91

92 \* **Rosemarie Preneta entered the meeting via telephone at approximately 6:50 p.m.**

93

94 **5. Chair’s remarks** – Joe Mirra reported there will be a limited reopening of HUBCAP. The  
95 exploratory pipeline will be the first pipeline to be offered sometime in March. This pipeline is  
96 important for the community and especially for any graduating high school students who are  
97 thinking about future employment. There will be 4-5 occupations represented. Also, Joe hopes  
98 to revive the Small Business Council. HUBCAP is looking for donations to run some newspaper  
99 ads to try to reach business owners who have gone out of business. If you are able to help,  
100 please contact Joe.

101

102 **6. Staff report/regional matters – January report** – Tim reviewed this staff report (*copy attached*)  
103 and the following items were noted:

104 ➤ IWWC and PZC approved the application for the Proton Beam Therapy Center planned  
105 for the 12-acre site on Northrop Road. This \$72 million project is the largest project in the  
106 works right now.

107 ➤ Talks about the expanded uses in the I-5 zone are on hold until March/April

108 ➤ The Amazon application for a facility at 5 Research Parkway is still being considered but  
109 not yet rescheduled with IWWC

110 ➤ Corporation Counsel, the Mayor, EDC and Engineering are aggressively pursuing ways  
111 to reduce excessive train noise at railroad crossings. The Town is working to get the

112 Quinnipiac Street and Hall Avenue crossings identified as one crossing which will reduce  
 113 the train horns sounded by 5 for each passing train. Also, the railroad is looking at  
 114 utilizing "way sounding" horns (currently used at the crossing near CVS). This type of  
 115 horn is quieter (due to sound being directed downward) and is automatically tripped as  
 116 the train nears the crossing.

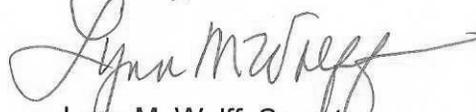
- 117 ➤ Regarding the Update on Town Center,
- 118 • WCI reported that a small grocery store is scheduled to open in the building at the  
 119 corner of North Orchard and Center Streets (former home to Design House Too).
  - 120 • Jake's closed and the business has been bought by a Cheshire businessman who  
 121 plans to open a chop house with an Italian flair.
  - 122 • WCI is hosting some free Social Media classes for Town Center businesses. WCI  
 123 felt that the best way to help businesses is to enable them to do business in this  
 124 new environment. Tim gave Kathy credit for helping businesses to grow.
  - 125 • WCI also has 3 Valentine's Day promotions going on to help drive business to our  
 126 Town Center.

127  
 128 **7. Other community business** – Jim Wolfe said the EDC has changed drastically over the last 30  
 129 years. We are now more involved with all aspects of the community. He'd like the EDC to  
 130 consider changing its name to the Economic and Community Development Commission. He  
 131 feels we go way beyond doing, for example, tax incentives and that this new name would be  
 132 more appropriate to what the Commission does.

133 Tim Ryan added that the Town is now actively interviewing candidates for the EDC/Program  
 134 Planning secretary position.

135  
 136 **There being no further business, Patricia Cymbala made a motion to adjourn the meeting at**  
 137 **7:10 p.m.; Rob Fritz seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

Sincerely,



Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Staff Report

January 2021 Activities  
Presented at February 2021 EDC meeting

### Local Initiatives

- Funding for the Town Center parking lot improvement project that involves new paving and lighting improvements in the lots behind Simpson Court and two parking lots on Wallace Avenue was approved by the Town Council at their meeting on 1/26. This project generated extensive discussion due mainly to the history of the Simpson Court lot. Improvements are scheduled for late spring
- IWWC and PZC approved the application for the Proton Beam Therapy Center being planned for the undeveloped 12-acre site on Northrop Road. Pending final Certificate of Need approvals from the State, site preparation should begin on this \$72MM project in early summer of this year
- At their 1/11/21 meeting, the PZC voted (per the request of the Mayor, Public Utilities Director, Law Department and EDC) to close the public hearing on the regulation change discussions pertaining to expanded uses in the I-5 Zone. The respective parties making the request will meet to articulate relevant language and will provide a work product by 3/31/21
- As of this writing, Montante Construction, on behalf of Amazon, is not on the agenda for plan review at IWWC's 2/3 meeting. Amazon is seeking approvals to build a 219,000 sf warehouse on the former BMS site at 5 Research Parkway. They last presented to IWWC at the November 2020 meeting

### Creating Opportunities

- CTrail representatives are actively conducting decibel level tests on the trains that travel the Hartford Line corridor in response to our complaint regarding excessive noise. Tests are currently being conducted and results are expected in early February. Corporation Council has been aggressively pursuing this initiative
- Discussions continue on the initiative to allow the continuance of outdoor dining in a post-COVID environment. An ad-hoc group, led by Councilor Shortell, is working with planning officials to determine what regulations may need to be amendment to support this business and customer friendly goal.
- The potential future uses of our historic railroad station have been the subject of much discussion. Per the Commission's direction, staff continues to foster the requisite discussions to pursue the vision of converting the railroad station into a more robust center for economic activity.

### Marketing

- Our digital marketing initiative has been launched! We are now live on LinkedIn and Facebook. Instagram with follow soon. Our email marketing efforts have begun and our new website landing page should be ready the first week in February. It's been a journey! Our infrastructure is now ready to be utilized as we see fit
- The Committee approved financial support for the HUBCAP's Pipeline Program. The Pipeline Program prepares job seekers in specific fields for employment opportunities through skills training and direct contact with potential employers

### Trade Shows

- None scheduled

### Update on Town Center

- No report

### Miscellaneous

- Interviews for the Program Planning Secretary's position are now taking place

### In the News

- *Mayor Dickinson seeks school board's input on historic train station...RJ, 1/7...* The Mayor has requested that school officials provide pros and cons for moving Wallingford Adult Education out of the historic train station
- *Wetlands panel OK's 7-Eleven application...RJ, 1/8...* IWWC approved an application by 7-Eleven for development on the lot south of Sonic Drive-In at 1033 N. Colony Road

- *CT business starts set record pace in late 2020...HBJ, 1/8...According to the Secretary of State's Office CTData, 3,200 new business starts were recorded in November 2020.*
- *CT companies see sensors as game-changing technology...HBJ, 1/11...Wallingford-based Amphenol Corp. announced plans to acquire sensor-technology company MTS Systems Corp for \$1.7 billion. Amphenol has seen more and more of their interconnect products being married together with some type of sensor so, even with the large price tag, this strategy makes sense.*
- *Proposed zoning changes withdrawn...RJ, 1/13...At the request of the Mayor, a proposal to allow more kinds of businesses and industries in the Watershed Protection District was withdrawn.*
- *Barstool Fund helps bail out 2 restaurants...RJ, 1/13...Laskara Restaurant and Gaetano's Tavern on Main have benefited from donations from the Barstool Fund, a gofundme-type web page that has raised \$22.4 million to support 110 businesses of all kinds.*
- *Simpson Court in Downtown Wallingford: Council set to continue parking lot debate...RJ, 1/24...The Town Council is scheduled to revisit the proposal to improve a private parking lot at its January 26 meeting*
- *Hawaiian cuisine coming to town...RJ, 1/25...Pokémoto Hawaiian Poke' plans to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> CT location by opening a restaurant in the Lowe's Plaza, in the former Smashburger site*
- *Passion for crystals prompts woman to start online business...RJ, 1/25...Alyssa Martin, with her passion for crystals and crystal healing, started a new online business called Bite The Bullet Gems, which uses empty shell casings to make necklaces with crystals*
- *Meriden nutrition business expands into Wallingford...RJ, 1/26...Wallingford Nutrition Spot opened on January 18 at 314 Main Street, Yalesville*
- *Parking in Downtown Wallingford: Lots to be renovated, expanded...After two 5-hour meetings this month, the Town Council approved funding for 3 parking lot improvement projects and renewed leases that expand public parking in a portion of Simpson Court's rear lot*
- *Speak, Italian: Michael's Trattoria...CT Magazine, Jan. 2021...An interview with Michael Tiscia about his restaurant*

### **New & Expanding Businesses**

- New (September and October 2020)
  - Taco Pacifico...97 Chapel Street, Yalesville
  - Century Design...95 N. Cherry Street
  - New England Hops Craft Beer Bar & Grill...600 N. Colony Road
  - MRC Global...15 Sterling Drive
- Expanded
  - Radiology Associates...101 N. Plains Industrial Road
- Relocated
  - CT Beverage Mart...170 N. Colony Road
  - The Nail Café...2 Chapel Street, #5, Yalesville

### **Results of EDC Marketing Activities**

Advertising	0
Brokers/Site Consultants	2
Direct Contact	5
State/CERC/Chamber/REX	2
Trade Shows	0
Business Assistance	0
Total	9

Respectfully,

Tim Ryan