



**TOWN OF MADISON
CONNECTICUT 06443
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Approved April 9, 2009

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Madison Economic Development Commission held on Thursday, March 12, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. Madison Town Campus.

Present: Commissioners Peter Thomas, Jim Ball, Edwin Moore, Jim Satterwhite, Anne Foley, Hank Yaggi

Also present: Tom Banisch

Peter Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:44 p.m.

1. **Public comment.** There was no discussion under public comment.
2. **Approval of minutes, February 12, 2009.** The following corrections were made of the minutes of the regular meeting of February 12, 2009:

Page 1, Also present, correct spelling of name "Banisch"

Page 1, Item 1, correct spelling of name "Banisch" in paragraph 1 and 2

Page 4, typing error, "The meeting **was** adjourned at 8:45 p.m."

On motion made by Mr. Lombard, and seconded by Mr. Yaggi, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 12, 2009 as corrected.

3. **Update report on Bradley Road Vision Study Project.** Mr. Thomas noted that he and Mr. Ball had attended a joint meeting with representatives from Planning and Zoning and Planimetrics. Mr. Ball noted that there was discussion on Wall Street and the issues related to building construction materials, design, accessibility, aesthetics and funding. Mr. Thomas commented that by the end of the meeting, the group came to the simple consensus that it is better to plan as opposed to not plan. The Commission budget was returned to \$7000 which is the same level as last year. Much of this budget will focus on working on the next phase of the preliminary development. One of the goals will be to help provide business with clarity. Mr. Thomas agreed that it would be helpful to create an executive summary of the Study.

Peter Thomas, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foly – Secretary

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Edwin Moore
James Satterwhite

In response to a question by Mr. Banisch, Mr. Thomas noted that the waste water treatment issue is a recommendation within the study.

Mr. Thomas noted that he and Mr. Ball will continue to serve as the Economic Development Commission representatives with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Satterwhite commented that it will be important for the Commission to get out in front of how to assist businesses in the future as the economic climate creates the potential for high retail vacancy rates even in towns like Madison. Mr. Banisch commented that he had heard that some local landlords have lowered their rent to encourage vacancies to be filled. He also noted that he had heard that the railroad up and over was moving forward again.

Mr. Yaggi questioned if the Commission had a presentation on EDC activities which could be helpful in showing businesses the goals of the Commission and what it can do to help local business. Mr. Thomas noted that David Kadamus had generated a power point presentation that might be available and he agreed to contact Mr. Kadamus.

Mr. Thomas noted that at a New Haven Economic Development Corporation meeting the idea of a business champion for the downtown area was brought up to help market the Vision Study. Mr. Thomas requested that Commission members come up with recommendations for appropriate community leaders who could be effective business contacts as the study moves forward.

4. **Update report on Economic Summit.** Mr. Thomas noted that one of the goals of the Economic Summit will be to assist with providing coordination with the agencies and services available for businesses in the State. Under the current and future economic environment, businesses will be struggling and the summit can be one means of making information about business assistance available. The web site will be another possible resource to provide helpful resource information and assistance for local businesses. He views updating of the web page to include appropriate links as one of the top priorities. Agencies that should be included on the web page include CERC, SBA, and SCORE. He believes it will be important to get ahead of any future possible economic issues that could cause additional issues for local businesses. The plan continues to be to hold the summit at the High School at a date during the spring vacation. He would recommend a breakfast meeting with refreshments. The Commission will have to pay for the custodial help for the facility. Groups receiving invitation should include the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and Jaycees.

Mr. Yaggi commented that he believes the economic summit and web page will be helpful in opening doors.

Ms. Foley suggested that it would be helpful to have representatives from commercial and residential real estate available to discuss their vision for the real estate market for the next year.

Peter Thomas, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foly – Secretary

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Mr. Ball agreed to be the liaison to coordinate the Economic Summit with Town administrative staff. Mr. Ball also agreed to confirm if membership in Main Street has been secured and if so, he agreed to see if they would be interested in participating in the summit.

Mr. Yaggi commented that it would be beneficial for all speakers to be on the same page so that conflicting views are not presented. Mr. Thomas noted that the purpose of the summit is not to present views but to educate about what the different agencies see as happening with the economy in Madison in the coming year, describe what their agency or organization does and review the services that they can provide to local businesses.

Mr. Moore questioned if the Commission should look into bringing in locators who help locate sites for commercial development and business. Mr. Thomas noted that locators generally are highly paid skilled consultants so the funding would not be available at this time to involve these professionals.

Mr. Thomas agreed to advise the Commission of the date for the Summit by e-mail once it has been confirmed.

5. **Discussion on proposed position of Director Economic Development.** Mr. Thomas noted that funding for the position of Director of Economic Development was included in the Commission's budget request, however, it was removed from the budget. It is not likely that this position will be approved this year due to the current staffing and budget issues. The staff position should receive consideration in the future at a more appropriate time.

6. **Discussion on EDC intern.** Mr. Banisch commented that there would be a better chance of finding an appropriate student intern during the summer months. Mr. Thomas commented that the issue of who an intern would report to would still need to be resolved including desk space and access to a phone and computer. Mr. Yaggi noted that it is his understanding that any intern hired would need to receive some compensation in the form of salary or college credit.

Mr. Ball noted that UConn students had been utilized for the survey last year. Mr. Thomas noted that these students had been supervised by UConn staff rather than Town staff. Mr. Thomas would like to continue to pursue the designation of a Town staff person to be the contact person for the Economic Development.

7. **Discussion on list of 10 items prepared by Commission members for consideration for future EDC projects.** Mr. Thomas recommended that discussion on the 10 items for consideration for future EDC projects be held off for discussion at the next regular meeting. The list should prioritize the projects that each Commission member believes should be the focus of the Commission in the future. He requested that members circulate their lists in advance of the meeting for review by other members. Once this list is developed, the Commission should focus on how to accelerate preparation of support to local business in anticipation of additional economic concerns for the future. Planning efforts should continue while the Commission concentrates on its efforts to assist businesses.

Peter Thomas, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
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8. **Plan of Conservation and Development.** Mr. Thomas noted that the whole Bradley Road Vision Study is being incorporated into the Plan of Conservation and Development. He sees this action as a significant advance for the Commission by providing it with the opportunity to take a leadership role. The Commission will need to make a determination of a member who can serve as the EDC representative to the Plan of Conservation and Development.

9. **Discussion on Commission Mission Statement.** Mr. Thomas recommended that discussion on the mission statement be delayed pending discussion on the 10 items for future EDC projects since these items could impact the development of the mission statement.

10. **Old business.** There were no items discussed under old business.

11. **New business.** Mr. Thomas noted that at the next meeting the Commission should work on the development of a focus and plan of attack for the next year to be prepared to assist businesses as needed. He believes it will be important to be proactive and develop a plan as quickly as possible.

On a motion made by Mr. Ball, and seconded by Mr. Moore, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Madison Economic Development Commission meeting will be April 9, 2009, 7:30 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk

Peter Thomas, Chairman
Hank Yaggi – Vice Chair
Anne Foly – Secretary

Jim Ball
Ryan Duques
Edwin Moore
James Satterwhite