



Town of Madison, CT

Economic Development Commission

Approved April 11, 2019

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on March 14, 2019, 7:30 p.m. at the Town Campus

Present: Commissioners Ryan Duques, Jim Ball, Matt Bloom, Anne Foley, Lisa Miksis, Ed Pellegrino, Mark Steffen; David Anderson, Town Planner

Mr. Duques called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of regular meeting, January 10, 2019. On motion made by Mr. Steffen, and seconded by Mr. Bloom the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 10, 2019 as submitted.
2. Public comment. There were no public comments.
3. Tweed New Haven Airport: Letter of Support. Mr. Duques noted that there is a bill in the Transportation Committee at the State Legislature that would allow the airport to lengthen their runway so the airport could expand its service. He has drafted a letter to the Committee from the Commission, urging support of this bill which would assist with encouraging growth in the greater New Haven region. Members had been provided with a copy of the draft letter. He asked for Commission approval for this letter of support to be sent by him as Chairman of the EDC.

On motion made by Mr. Steffen, and seconded by Mr. Bloom the Commission voted unanimously to approve a letter from Ryan Duques, Chairman, Economic Development Commission, to the members of the Connecticut General Assembly Transportation Committee, indicating support for H.B. 7143 An Act Concerning the Length of Runway 2-10 at Tweed New Haven Airport.

4. Academy Building: Public – Private Partnership Concept. Mr. Duques provided background information on the Ad Hoc Committee for the Academy School. He noted that the Committee was formed based on sentiment from a Town-wide survey that was conducted. This survey indicated that 56% of the respondents supported the idea of creating a Community Center in the Academy School. The charge of the Ad Hoc Committee is to develop a plan and provide a design and cost estimate for a proposed Community Center at the 53,000 sf Academy School to be able to put a project forward to the public in a 2 phase referendum. Initial estimates to renovate the building for community center uses could be as high at \$14 million plus operating costs which could be several hundred thousand dollars per year if Town programs, like those that

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would be provided by the Beach and Recreation Department, become the primary uses of the building. The architect has completed some initial work on developing a floor plan that would include ways to divide the building for various uses. Through the public hearing process, interest has been expressed for use of the building by the Beach and Recreation Department, Youth and Family Services, use for arts and theatre events and activities, compatible programs for the Senior Center, a commercial kitchen, gymnasium, gallery for art and a fitness center. After providing space for mechanics, an elevator and a lobby, there would be approximately 43,000 sf available for programing. With 13,000 needed for hallways, there would be approximately 30,000 available for dedicated program space. Mr. Anderson noted that a number of area groups have contacted the Committee to indicate their interest in utilizing space in the proposed community center.

Mr. Duques noted that he and Mr. Anderson had attended a public hearing on the project and had proposed that consideration be given to moving toward a public/private partnership that would include co-worker shared staff space and a health and fitness wellness component. A primary benefit would be the generation of revenue through private lease of a portion of the building space. The focus would be to reach out to a business that can offer unique programs to be offered to a demographic that is currently not being served in Madison or the immediate area.

Mr. Anderson advised that he has talked to the Finance Office and they have advised that a \$15 million bond would cost the Town \$1 million per year for 20 years which could amount to a cost of around \$140 per average household per year.

Mr. Steffen commented that the upcoming bonding for the Library and school would also need to be considered in this equation.

Mr. Duques suggested that a first step should be to conduct an inventory of all of the current Town spaces available for programing to have a better idea of what is available before planning for space for future needs.

Mr. Duques recommended that Economic Development Commission consider taking action indicating they are in favor of the concept of a Community Center that would have a large amount of space dedicated to a public/private partnership that would facilitate public uses and needs and also provide a revenue generating component that would assist with the financing of the project. He noted that the public space could be offered unfinished as a way save more on construction costs and to provide for greater flexibility for a business to finish their space in a manner that meets their needs. In addition, under a lease arrangement, space could always come back to the Town if the needs increase.

Mr. Anderson noted that he has had discussions with businesses and there appears to be a substantial amount of interest in the idea of a public/private partnership. The Academy School

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facility would provide a unique opportunity for certain businesses looking for an appealing building in a good location in a Town where many current employees live.

Mr. Ball commented that, while he supports the community center concept, he has concerns about the ability to fit such a bid. The committee is aiming for a proposal to be completed in the next few weeks so the final proposal can go to referendum in May.

On motion made by Ms. Miksis, and seconded by Mr. Steffen the Economic Development Commission voted unanimously to express its agreement with the concept of utilizing the Academy School for community service uses utilizing a public/private partnership to create a sustainable Community Center model that facilitates needed community oriented services that fulfill multiple community needs and that also includes a private component so the project does not rely on taxpayer funding alone to support the purchase price and operating costs of the development and maintenance of this facility. In addition, the Economic Development Commission encourages the Town to conduct a utilization study to determine the current community space available and additional community needs that require space.

5. Update: Discussion on Madison's Marketing Attributes: Education and Recreation development. Ms. Miksis noted that she, Mr. Bloom, and Mr. Steffen are continuing to work on the aggregate list of recreational properties and facilities. They plan to have information necessary to discuss this item at the April meeting. Mr. Bloom noted that they have been in contact with Beach and Recreation staff and are working on prioritizing the list.

Ms. Foley noted that she is finalizing the list of historical places and will forward this information to Ms. Miksis to include in her list.

6. Update: CERC Project Update. Mr. Anderson noted that the focus group with property owners and business owners was held on February 26th and CERC is putting together feedback from this meeting. They will be putting together a Draft Action Plan to present to the EDC for consideration and use in focusing on how to move forward with economic development efforts.

7. Update: Madison Center Project. Mr. Duques noted that the Town is continuing steps to obtain the final easement.

8. Board Reports (BOS, BOF, Planning and Zoning). Mr. Anderson advised of property on New Road that was sold and will be considered for an economic development project.

Mr. Ball recommended that efforts to solicit bio-science facilities to locate in Madison be pursued. Mr. Ball also noted that he will work to arrange for the proposed State Economic Development Commissioner to come to an EDC meeting once he is confirmed.

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9. Old Business. There were no items discussed under Old Business.

10. New Business. The Commission members were advised that the Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Woodstock Revival Concert on the Green in July in honor of the 50th anniversary of Woodstock. There will be an art show before the concert.

11. Adjournment. On motion made by Mr. Steffen, and seconded by Mrs. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk