



# Town of Madison, CT

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## Economic Development Commission

Subject to Approval

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on March 9, 2023, 7:00 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus and via zoom

Present: Commissioners Jonathan Stein, Matt Bloom, Tom Hummel, Lindsay Johnson, Gregg Wagner, Justin Murphy, Board of Finance; Sheri Cote, Economic Development Director; Michelle Call, Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Stein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Introduction.

Dr. Stein introduced Lindsay Johnson as a new member of the Commission.

2. Approval of minutes of regular meeting of February 9, 2023.

On motion made by Mr. Wagner, and seconded by Mr. Hummel, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 9, 2023 as corrected.

CORRECTIONS:

Page 3, Item 11, second paragraph motion was seconded by Mr. Wagner rather than Mr. Bloom.

Page 4, Item 13, motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Wagner rather than Mr. Bloom.

3. Public Comment.

There were no public comments.

4. Chamber of Commerce Report.

Ms. Call reviewed the Chamber of Commerce activities as follows:

- The Super Bowl Downtown event was very successful.
- A Business Book Club has been formed where Club members read a book about business and then get together to discuss the contents.
- The Chamber has formed a Young Professional's group that will be meeting on March 23 at Donahue's.
- The Business Expo is scheduled for March 30 at the Madison Beach Hotel.
- The Shredding Event will be held on April 29.
- A new Retail Committee has been formed.

Ms. Cote noted that she and Dr. Stein had met with the owner of Tidewater as a part of the Business Retention effort. The owner was very pleased with the effort of the EDC, on behalf of the Town, to show its interest in local businesses and wants to work with businesses to help them thrive not just survive. This is an example of how this program can make an impact. Dr. Stein agreed that this was a very positive experience and he encouraged members to sign up to join in one of the Business Retentions meetings.

Dr. Stein noted that he, Ms. Cote and Ms. Call had met to discuss the upcoming EDC Breakfast Meeting. There was discussion about combining this event with the Chamber's Business Expo since the breakfast is a joint Town and Chamber event and the Chamber agrees that including the Town would be valuable. In addition to sponsoring the joint EDC-Chamber breakfast meeting, the EDC would also sponsor a booth at the Expo. The \$250 fee would be a good investment. It was suggested that invitees include both Chamber and non-Chamber members and individuals in the Young Professionals and Retail Groups. Town Department Heads and Officials would be invited to represent the Town and they are looking at also bringing in State and Federal level representatives to provide input at the breakfast once they determine the State resources that will be at the Business Expo. Ms. Call is reaching out to the Madison Beach Hotel to see if this is a possible site for the Breakfast.

Dr. Stein noted that there is time to determine the invitees at the next meeting.

In response to a question by Mr. Hummel, Dr. Stein noted that the primary benefit to the Breakfast is that it has generated greater visibility for the EDC and helped business feel supported.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### 5. Waste Water Study Update.

Ms. Cote reviewed the purpose of the Waste Water Study which is to analyze the Downtown septic systems. The original intent was to piggyback this study with a larger project but it was determined that, since the Waste Water Study was going to be funded with ARPA funds, the study now needs to have an RFP and go out to bid so it needs to be separated from the other study.

### 6. Grant Program Update.

Ms. Cote provided members with a list of the 12 businesses that had applied for an EDC grant with the project and cost listed. As required, the applications include quotes and, if necessary, a letter from the landlord. With the maximum grant capped at \$2,500 and some of the grants falling under \$2500, the total funds requested for the 12 projects is \$24,425. With a \$30,000 budget that leaves a total of \$5,575 available for Round 2 which is due on April 1. She requested that the Commission take action to approve the applications. She noted that this program is set up as a reimbursement program so receipts will need to be provided, as well as a picture of the finished project, to receive reimbursement.

Dr. Stein questioned if the grant guidelines contained any language that specifies that the applicant must complete the project as described so the Commission will be able to ensure that they do the work that was approved. The Commission members agreed language should be included that specifies the applicant must complete the project as described and that supports the spirit of the program.

The Commission members also discussed the idea of whether to request additional funds for the program since only \$5575 is left for Round 2. Following discussion, the Commission members agreed to wait to see how many applications are received in Round 2 before asking for additional funds.

On motion made by Dr. Stein, and seconded by Mr. Wagner, the Committee voted unanimously to approve 12 grant applications for the EDC Grant Program for a total of \$24,425 to fund the requested amount or a maximum of \$2,500 if the application outlines a project with a cost over \$2,500.

7. Academy Advisory Committee Update.

In response to a question by Dr. Stein, Mr. Wagner noted that the Academy Advisory Committee has been focusing on integrating the possible uses into the different rooms and areas projected to be available in the plan. Focus groups in the area of performing arts, culinary arts and, studio arts have been held with interested parties being asked to outline any possible uses if space is available. In addition, the Committee also developed an outline of any possible uses identified in the community survey.

Dr. Stein noted that the original budget was \$15.9 million and there has been some concerns about whether this will be adequate. They are looking at other possible grants that could be available to be able to provide more and fund-raising efforts have been successful. There has also been discussion about setting up a follow-up committee.

Dr. Stein noted that there has been discussion about the need for another gymnasium since there are gyms in the schools but it has been shown that there are challenges with using the schools due to security and time overlaps. There will need to further discussion about use of the gym and theatre for Town and community functions as well as possible school use.

8 POCD Update.

Dr. Stein noted that Mr. Wood is the liaison for the POCD and he is not able to be present this evening for an update. This group meets monthly and their work will be integrated with the Strategic Plan.

9. Business Retention.

Ms. Cote noted requested that members continue to sign up on Sign-up Genius to join in on any of the Business Retention meetings with local businesses. She noted that currently meetings are scheduled with two different businesses for Monday, March 13 at 2:00 and 3:00 p.m. Some of

the members are having a problem with the system so Ms. Cote agreed to look into why there are some issues with signing up through this system.

In response to a question, Ms. Cote noted that she will be making private notes on the meetings that will be used for internal reference.

10. EDC Business Breakfast.

Discussion on Business Breakfast was addressed in Item #4 Chamber of Commerce Report above.

11. Strategic Plan Update.

Dr. Stein noted that based on the RFP's received, presentations and cost and scope, the Town is narrowing down a vendor to work on the plan. The next meeting is next Monday.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

12. Best Practices Certification Application.

Dr. Stein noted that Madison had been awarded with a Best Practices Award in 2019 and is now eligible to apply again. Ms. Cote and Ms. Mannix will be working on the application to submit it before the May 5, 2023 deadline.

13. Welcome Sign Designs.

Ms. Cote noted that she is working with Ms. Mannix to draft an RFP for a sign maker to design and install Welcome Signs. This project will be funded with ARPA funds. She showed a sample sign from another Town that can be used as a guide. She reviewed a map of locations for the sign which included the Killingworth and Guilford lines on Route 80, the Clinton and Guilford line on Route 1, the three exits off of I-95, and the Rockland area on the Durham Madison line.

Mr. Bloom noted that Ms. Miksis had worked on the Hammonasset sign design so she might be a good resource willing to assist with this project.

Committee members suggested that consideration be given to using the colors black and gold and also to consider using the logo *Sea, Shop, Stay* on the sign.

Mr. Murphy reported that the work by the Board of Finance on the budget is going smoothly. The Board is aware of two large projects ahead in the future but not possibly for a number of years.

Dr. Stein noted that with the new Commission members of Mr. Wagner, Mr. Hummel and Ms. Johnson, the EDC is now a full 7-member Commission.

13. Adjournment.

On motion made by Dr. Stein, and seconded by Mr. Hummel, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Holland-Buckley