



Town of Madison, CT

Economic Development Commission

Approved August 8, 2019

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on July 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m. at the Town Campus

.Present: Commissioners Ryan Duques (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Jim Ball (arrived 7:30 p.m.), Matt Bloom, Anne Foley, Lisa Miksis, Mark Steffen;

Ms. Foley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of regular meeting, May 9, 2019. On motion made by Ms. Miksis and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 9, 2019 as submitted.
2. Public comment. There was no one present for public comment.
3. Update: Discussion on Madison's Marketing Attributes: Education and Recreation Development. Ms. Miksis noted that there is no update on the Madison Marketing Attributes: Education and Recreation Development.

Mr. Ball commented that the list that was developed on the education and recreation assets is very thorough and the Commission should be looking at ways to make a decision on the best way to utilize this data and information.

Mr. Duques noted that the Board of Education recently hired a Communications staff person that will be helpful in Board of Education efforts and also with EDC efforts to promote the Town's positive education environment.

5. Update: Hammonasset Exit Signage/Madison Center Project. Ms. Miksis noted that, due to a directive from DEEP, it was announced at the last EDC meeting that a change had to be made to the design of the directional signs to be placed at the Hammonasset State Park exit, in order to be consistent with the Park signs. The necessary information is still included on the sign and the design is very clear and clean. The signs are up as of June 20th and look very impressive and have clear directional signs for the various locations an out-of-town visitor might be seeking. The font for the lettering is a little small so if the signs are redone in the future it might be beneficial to make the lettering a little larger.

Mr. Duques arrived at the meeting at 7:10 and showed the Commission members a picture of the signs that were installed exiting the park. He noted that the changes had to be made under the direction of the State Director of Parks in order to follow their guidelines. He suggested that

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pictures be provided to the newspaper to get some publicity on this positive work of the Commission to assist park visitors to locate the various business services provided in the community as one way to encourage economic support.

Mr. Steffen suggested that thought be given to developing ways to measure the effectiveness of the signs to increase economic activity in the community.

4. Update: Regional Economic Development Project. Mr. Duques provided an update on the idea that had developed at a regional meeting where municipal leaders from Branford, Durham, Guilford, Madison and North Branford had a follow-up meeting to further discuss regional economic development issues to help better position the area for economic development activities. There had been discussion about looking at assets shared by the areas towns and how these assets can be packaged to encourage economic development activities that would be initiated by the municipalities. Mr. Duques noted that an initial budget of \$3,000 - \$5,000 per town was proposed with additional funds to be solicited from private industry or utilities as appropriate. The EDC had approved the expenditure of \$3,000 from the FY 18-19 EDC budget to support this coalition and its activities. He believes this was a positive investment for the Commission and the Town. To date, all but North Branford has approved an expenditure of \$3,000 and they plan to take formal action on this item shortly.

Mr. Duques noted the Ms. Miksis had been of assistance in working on this project especially with the selection of the consultant to assist with the project. He noted that another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the strategic vision for the group once all of the Towns have joined. At the initial meeting he was the only individual present representing an economic development commission and he believes it would be helpful to have EDC members from other towns become involved to provide an economic development perspective on the group's efforts. One of the first efforts will be to assess the towns' strengths collectively and discuss how these can be marketed to benefit the individual towns and the regional as a whole.

In response to a question by Mr. Ball, Mr. Duques noted that the Towns involved in this regional effort include Madison, Guilford, Branford, North Branford and Durham. Mr. Ball commented that he agrees this effort could prove very beneficial to promote business and work on other regional efforts and he would like to see Madison take a lead role. Mr. Duques noted that Mr. Anderson is very involved with this project so he believes Madison is taking a leading role.

6. Board Reports (BOS, BOF, Planning and Zoning) Mr. Duques noted that he had written a letter as a private citizen to support that Wall Street development. This project required a variance because of the size of the structure and the parking set-up and the variance was approved by the Commission.

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Mr. Duques noted that he had a discussion with the building owner and business owner of Zero Gravity. This business has outgrown its space and might have had to look for alternative locations if their space could not be expanded. The approved changes helped this business and allowed them to expand and remain at their location in Madison. Mr. Duques commented that efforts to retain business are just as important to the EDC as efforts to bring new business to Town.

7. Old Business. Mr. Duques reminded the Commission members that Madison had joined the Tweed Coalition a number of months ago. He reported that a favorable court decision regarding the airport expansion efforts was recently received. While there are still outstanding FAA permitting issues, and the State has 90 days to appeal, the decision is a big positive step for the airport expansion effort. Mr. Duques noted that he had reached out to representatives of Southern Airways who had expressed frustration with some of the local authorities and the local environment surrounding the expansion efforts.

8. New Business. Mr. Ball noted that he will continue his efforts to have the State Economic Development Commissioner attend a Madison EDC meeting. He noted that he also has a relationship with the new OPM Director and he will reach out to him for assistance as needed.

Mr. Duques highlighted several instances when positive publicity on Town EDC related issues was provided in the local newspaper. He will pursue getting an article on the town services direction signs at the Hammonasset State Park exists into the paper.

Mr. Steffen noted that he will continue his efforts regarding the snow plowing in the Town Center issue and the septic waste water issue.

Mr. Duques provided an update on the conversation that had started between the Town and the State regarding State land on Route 1 near Hammonasset State Park. The Town would have an interest in helping to make land in the commercial district available for economic development. He noted that he, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Banisch, Representative Christine Cohen and a representative from DEEP had met regarding this item. DEEP was not opposed to the idea but had concerns that there could be public opposition to these efforts. A follow up call is scheduled for July 24th to identify the parties involved and the stakeholders and to discuss possible creative ways to pursue this concept. Mr. Duques agreed to provide members with the call-in number for this phone meeting so they will have the opportunity to join in the conversation.

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Mr. Steffen commented that he is aware of a number of positive examples of joint endeavors that preserve public land while using it in a responsible manner that creates economic vibrancy.

9. Adjournment. On motion made by Ms. Miksis, and seconded by Mr. Steffen, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk