

DRAFT MINUTES
BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2014 7:00 PM ROOM 129

Please note: The originally scheduled April 15th meeting is to be held on April 23rd.

Chairman Hal Kurfehs convened the meeting at 7:05 PM and established a quorum of members:

Present: Hal Kurfehs, Chairman; Mara Frankel, Vice Chair; Dave Matte, Secretary;
Commissioner Greg Dembowski; Commissioner Jim Fisher; Commissioner Nancy Tolmoff

Also Present: Andrea Wagner, Web Designer

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Emily Cole Prescott from a recording of the meeting.

1.) Approval of Meeting Minutes (03/18/14) – **Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to accept the minutes as written and submitted. Secretary Matte seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

2.) Updates – Commissioner Dembowski gave a quick update about the Jumpstart program. Commissioner Dembowski stated that one of the things that is on the website is this idea of a business incubator, and he and Nelson Malwitz have been exploring this topic. Both he and Mr. Malwitz will be attending a conference toward the end of May regarding a national business incubator program. The proposed tax incentive program is also being created by the Town. The planning of a town event and the spend your money in Brookfield programs have not yet taken off.

Chairman Kurfehs stated that the sale of the Laurel Hill Road project is complete. He also noted that the 101-unit approved project to be located at the site of the former Barnyard [857/857A Federal Road] was sold in January. Both of these projects are incentive housing developments. Chairman Kurfehs noted that incentive housing is based on the local area median income level, not the state level.

3.) EDC Website Development Workshop (Target Completion Date: May) – Ms. Wagner stated that the site has been built in WordPress, which makes it completely editable, and she stated that she was able to use the pictures that she had been provided. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he has met with Community Development Director Katherine Daniel to help gather information for the website links. Chairman Hal Kurfehs stated that the pictures are very pretty and talk about the quality of life, but noted that there should be something about the business buildings in the pictures. Ms. Wagner responded that she was unsure if it was appropriate to use the names of the businesses. Chairman Kurfehs stated that it is appropriate. Ms. Wagner stated that the site is built to automatically fit every screen and every tablet. Ms. Wagner stated that a business directory has been built, and the Chamber of Commerce members list has been added to this page. Ms. Wagner noted that someone will need to continuously process requests to be added to this list; in addition, someone will need to add the names to the list. Ms. Wagner stated that she and Commissioner Dembowski reviewed and condensed the business categories found

in the Chamber's list. She suggested that information about this free business posting option could be added to an upcoming *Brookfield Matters* publication. Ms. Wagner also mentioned that the Commission will have no way of knowing when a business is no longer active, and therefore this list will never be 100% accurate. Ms. Wagner stated that not all of the business information that she had received had an email or web address. Commissioner Dembowski asked how many businesses do not have email addresses listed, and he offered to contact them for email information. Ms. Wagner demonstrated how the search function will work on the site. Ms. Wagner stated that she was given access to the Town's Constant Contact information, and she was able to create a list entitled Brookfield EDC. If the Commission would like to send an email newsletter, they would use that Constant Contact account list.

The Commission reviewed the proposed homepage, including the article that Chairman Kurfehs had written. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the Town's contact number is currently Chairman Kurfehs's number, and the Land Use Office fax number is listed. Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that the members of the Commission could have the option of an Economic Development Commission email address to use on the site. Ms. Wagner collected contact information from the members of the Commission.

Ms. Wagner will make a list of all the pages for which she will need content. Ms. Wagner stated that the "Open for Business" header should be viewed as an invitation for businesses, and perhaps could offer an overview of what Brookfield has to offer.

Ms. Wagner stated that she added some information about the Four Corners Plan. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he will put together a purchase order for membership to Connecticut Economic Resource Center for a local, basic membership. Ms. Wagner also noted that she will need information about Regional Economic Planning, which Chairman Hal Kurfehs volunteered to draft.

Ms. Wagner stated that there are some links which she can obtain from State websites, but she just needs to know which State links she should add.

Ms. Wagner stated that she had extracted some of the information from the Plan of Conservation and Development for the living in Brookfield topic. Chairman Kurfehs stated that one of the items that the Commission does need is some sort of indication of how far the Town is from other major locations in the area, such as New York. Ms. Wagner stated that the community page needs some more information. Commissioner Tolmoff stated that she had made a video by going around Town and taking pictures of places throughout the Town. She had also done a video about the four seasons throughout Brookfield, both of which may be used.

Commissioner Tolmoff offered to take pictures of the schools throughout the Town. Vice Chair Frankel mentioned that there should be some information about the Brookfield School system. Chairman Kurfehs noted that perhaps the Board of Education should be contacted for information about the school system. Commissioner Tolmoff listed the information she had collected relative to health care. She reviewed the list with the Commission. Commissioner Tolmoff will provide more content to be added to this page. Ms. Wagner stated that she had pulled some information from the housing content available on the Town's website. Chairman Kurfehs pointed out Brookfield's low tax rate, especially in comparison to other surrounding towns. He mentioned that this fact should be highlighted on the site. Commissioner Dembowski noted that some of this information will be included as part of the fact sheet.

Ms. Wagner stated that she does not have any information for the Get Started page. Commissioner Fisher asked who will be the contact for those interested in potential business development.

Ms. Wagner stated that she does not have any information for Business Resources page. Commissioner Dembowski stated that there will be State links, the Regional Economic information, and the Zoning map.

Vice Chair Frankel suggested that the Commission add information about recently approved projects to the News page. Chairman Kurfehs stated that these approvals should be added to the Open for Business page because they demonstrate the town's decisiveness (eg – BJ's Costco's fast approvals). Vice Chair Frankel also noted that newly issued permits could be included somewhere on the website. Ms. Wagner noted that the News items may be moved into an Archive section. Ms. Wagner noted that the news items should be consistent and dated. Chairman Kurfehs stated that there will be a feature story Inside Business on Western Connecticut Economic Development Alliance in June in the News Times. He noted that this type of news should be added to the News section of the website.

The Commission pondered who will be asked to do future updates of the website. The Commission discussed the potential of asking the Secretary to start updating some of the website information.

Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that this sheet should include all the key highlights in the website summarized into a one-page PDF.

The Commission discussed the following tasks:

- Chairman Kurfehs stated that he will work on Regional Economic Planning, and he will try to find a locator map.

- Vice Chair Frankel stated that she will work on community facts and fact sheets and homepage information. She also volunteered to help with gathering transportation information.
- Commissioner Fisher stated that he will work on gathering information about the schools and its accomplishments.
- Commissioner Dembowski stated that he will contact the businesses to obtain the missing email addresses. He will also work on getting the payment for the CERC information. He will also draft information for the Town services information. Commissioner Dembowski will work to gather some Business Resources as well.
- Commissioner Tolmoff will work on obtaining pictures for the education information. She will also work on drafting some information for health care. A couple of paragraphs of text are needed for this page.
- Secretary Matte will work on gathering housing information.
- All Commissioners will send their ideas about the website to Commissioner Dembowski, so Commissioner Dembowski can consolidate the ideas.

Commissioner Dembowski suggested that the fact sheet be done at the end, and the other Commissioners agreed with this suggestion.

Vice Chair Frankel asked if more pictures are needed for the website, and Commissioner Tolmoff volunteered to take some pictures of the commercial properties for the website. Ms. Wagner will add a picture of the Craft Center to the website. Chairman Kurfehs stated that a large industrial business should also be highlighted. Commissioner Tolmoff and Vice Chair Frankel noted that the small businesses should also be highlighted. Commissioner Dembowski stated that per the contract with Ms. Wagner, the Economic Development Commission has five hours of copy-editing for the website. Commissioner Dembowski also noted that the Commission has Pete Peterson, who was the Marketing Director for Danbury Hospital, and has volunteered to complete additional editing. Commissioner Dembowski stated that whenever he has the material, he can ask Mr. Peterson to review the site to clean it up a bit. Ms. Wagner noted that the information should be uniform. Ms. Wagner stated that she has already spent some time compiling and re-copying some of the information. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the site will not be live by the annual Town meeting, but the First Selectman would like to show the Town that the website development is coming along. Ms. Wagner stated that she will log into the Constant Contact account and create a template for the Economic Development Commission to use in the future as a newsletter. She asked if the Commission would like to import the business emails into the account for the newsletter to be sent out in the future. Ms. Wagner noted that the Commission may want to consider sending the first e-blast to everyone on the list to raise awareness of the site.

Commissioner Dembowski noted that perhaps the newsletter topic could be added to each agenda as a discussion point.

4.) Further Discussion – Commissioner Dembowski reiterated that he will not be present for the next meeting because he will be at the business incubator conference from the 18th to the 21st. He also mentioned that he will get the payment information together for the payment for Ms. Wagner. The Commission briefly discussed the potential of changing next month's meeting date to the 27th.

5.) Adjourn – **Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 PM. Commissioner Fisher seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**