

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**TUESDAY, September 16, 2014 7:00 PM – ROOM 209**

**Convene Meeting:** Chair Kurfehs called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance:

**Present:** Chair Hal Kurfehs; Vice Chair Mara Frankel; Secretary Dave Matte;  
Commissioner Greg Dembowski; Commissioner Nancy Tolmoff

**Absent:** Commissioner Jim Fisher

**Also Present:** Recording Secretary Emily Cole Prescott

*The Commission moved to discussion of the Approval of Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Tolmoff entered the room at 7:10 PM.*

**Approval of Meeting Minutes (08/19/14)** – Commissioner Dembowski stated that he read the minutes. **Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Chair Kurfehs seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

*The Commission moved to discussion of the website.*

**Website:** Chair Kurfehs stated that the proposed incubator program is given home-page prominence. Commissioner Dembowski stated that Nelson Malwitz is working to develop an incubator, and the information which he wrote for the website was to outline a future plan, not to demonstrate what is currently available. Commissioner Dembowski suggested that the information could either be taken down with an “under construction” message on this link for viewers, or the information could be re-worded. Commissioner Dembowski suggested that Nelson Malwitz be contacted and asked to re-write some of the business incubator information. Chair Kurfehs stated that if the picture on the home page cannot be moved, the information can be updated to properly reflect what is available. Chair Kurfehs stated that this incubator information should be written as a plan for the future.

E. Cole Prescott asked Chair Kurfehs and Commissioner Dembowski if she can reach out to Andrea Wagner, website developer, regarding the website posts, which have been forwarded to E. Cole Prescott from Chair Kurfehs. E. Cole Prescott will reach out to Andrea Wagner to see if there is some quick information to turn the posts off, or to help filter the posts. It was suggested that E.Cole Prescott communicate directly with Andrea Wagner who will probably field a limited number of questions before charging.

Vice Chair Frankel stated that news and information should be consistently updated on the website. Chair Kurfehs stated that he had written articles, and asked about the possibility of posting the articles on the website. Commissioner Dembowski agreed that the articles should be posted to the site. Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that it is best to post clean pdf versions without advertising due to the fact that these versions will be more legible on the site.

Commissioner Dembowski reviewed the analytics report with the Commission: 841 visitors in the first two weeks, and 672 of them were unique, which means they revisited the site. The average viewer spent 2 minutes and 43 seconds on the site, and the average viewer also looked at 3.88 pages. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he thinks this was a great launch. Secretary Matte asked if the Commission has any feedback to determine if the viewer received helpful information from visiting the site, but Commissioner Dembowski replied that these questions would require a survey. Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that a newsletter should be done again to keep the information and the website fresh.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that the next steps in the development of the business incubator is to visit two or three incubators in the state. Commissioner Dembowski reported that Bill Tinsley has visited an incubator in Tennessee. Commissioner Dembowski stated that WCSU and UCONN both have incubator programs. One of the first steps to creating this business incubator is to do some benchmarking. After other business incubators have been viewed, it would be appropriate to work on a plan for Brookfield. The national incubator website has services to help organizations create a plan. The plan can start as small as 5,000 to 6,000 square feet of office space with co-working spaces with computers, staff person, wifi service, and coffee every morning.

Vice Chair Frankel asked why the EDC would be creating an incubator when there are businesses that offer this same service. Commissioner Dembowski replied that the business incubator was one of the five initiatives of the Jump Start program. Commissioner Tolmoff stated that she thinks it would be beneficial for the EDC to partner with the Chamber of Commerce. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he and Nelson Malwitz had attended an incubator conference to learn how national incubator programs operate. He stated that now is the time to determine what is best for Brookfield. Vice Chair Frankel stated that she is unsure how something like this could be done without a part-time Economic Development position. Commissioner Tolmoff stated that she would also like to read books about business incubators to get more information.

*The Commission moved to discussion of Brookfield Village Incentive.*

**Brookfield Village Incentive** – Chair Kurfehs stated that the Board of Selectmen had discussed this topic at their last regular meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup>, and he, Commissioner Dembowski, and Commissioner Fisher were all present. Chair Kurfehs stated that he and Commissioner Fisher had both addressed the matter at the meeting. Chair Kurfehs reported that there is discussion that this decision will be brought to a broader forum, such as a town meeting or referendum. Additionally, the incentive amount has been lowered from the incentive amounts originally discussed at the August EDC meeting. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the Board of Finance voted against any deferment. Commissioner Dembowski also noted that the zone change for the rear parcel had been denied by the Zoning Commission. Vice Chair Frankel stated that the multi-family mixed use is approved for the Brookfield Village development. Chair Kurfehs stated that the plan all along was that the rear parcel would receive no tax incentive, but the development of the rear parcel was one of the conditions of incentive which Bill Tinsley had presented to the EDC at the August meeting. Vice Chair Frankel stated that anything built in the

Four Corners should be able to qualify for incentives, as she would rather see developers putting money into properties.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that the Board of Selectmen tabled discussion of this matter to the next Board of Selectmen meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that the community should speak up at the next Board of Selectmen meeting. Secretary Matte stated that the directions of the efforts are certainly positive, and he believes this is a matter of getting information to residents. Chair Kurfehs stated that a certain level of residential development must be reached in order to start attracting larger retail developers.

**FOI Workshop** – Chair Kurfehs reminded the Commission about the FOI Workshop, which is planned for October 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Economic Development Training** – Chair Kurfehs stated that he had sent information about this topic to each of the commissioners. Chair Kurfehs stated that he has spoken to Ginny in the First Selectman’s Office, in terms of getting a date for the meeting room for EDC training. There are four different sessions that could be offered. Chair Kurfehs stated that he would like to invite residents and other Town Commissions, so the event should be planned with some lead time. The Commission agreed to host EDC training on October 29<sup>th</sup>, starting at 7:00 PM with an EDC meeting beginning at 6:30 PM. This EDC meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> would replace the meeting normally held on the third Tuesday of the month. Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that the meeting should be taped, and Vice Chair Frankel suggested that a sound bite from the recording could be added to the website. Chair Kurfehs stated that he and Pete Petersen had a meeting with Southridge Technology Group about the possibility of hosting computer technology workshop trainings which would benefit business owners. Topics would include such items as tech support, data backup services, virus protection, and more. Commissioner Dembowski stated that Nelson Merchant works at UCONN, and he will come to do similar trainings for free. His services include training on topics such as forecasting, business plan creation, legal advice, among others. Commissioner Dembowski will ask Nelson Merchant to attend the EDC’s November meeting. Commissioner Dembowski will bring some of Nelson Merchant’s presentation information for review at the October meeting.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes (08/19/14)** – *This item was discussed earlier.*

**Website** – *discussed earlier in the meeting.*

**Update: Jump Start** – Commissioner Dembowski explained that there is now a Four Corners Association. The Four Corners Association has been planning the October 12<sup>th</sup> event, “Columbus Discovers the Four Corners”.

**Other Discussion** – *There was no other discussion at this time.*

**Adjourn** – **Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM, and Vice Chair Frankel seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**