

DRAFT MINUTES
BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, November 18, 2014 7:00 PM – Room 209

Convene Meeting: Chair Kurfehs called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and established a quorum of members:

Present: Chair Hal Kurfehs; Secretary Dave Matte; Commissioner Greg Dembowski; Commissioner Jim Fisher

Also Present: Recording Secretary Emily Cole Prescott

Approval of Meeting Minutes (10/29/14): Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Secretary Matte seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Discussion of October 29th Economic Development Training event: Secretary Matte stated that he thought the first speaker in particular offered some great information. Chair Kurfehs stated that all of the speakers had done a lot of homework for the event. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he had hoped more Board and Commission members would have attended the event. He also mentioned that the Commission should be more proactive about getting the Boards and Commissions on the EDC email list.

Discussion on Development of Regular Series of Business Educational Events:

Chair Kurfehs mentioned that a regular series could be done, such as a speaker series. Chair Kurfehs stated that the EDC may want to host the Small Business Center with Nelson Merchan for the next event. Chair Kurfehs stated that he had also spoken with a technology firm in the past, which would probably be interested in doing a presentation. Secretary Matte stated that it seemed as though there was a general interest in the presentation.

Commissioner Fisher had invited Jeff LeJava, Professor at Pace, to the October 29th meeting and event. Commissioner Fisher explained that Professor LeJava specializes in Land Use and Urban Development. Commissioner Fisher asked that Professor LeJava be added to the agenda and minutes distribution list, which is sent by Recording Secretary Prescott. Commissioner Dembowski replied that perhaps Commissioner Fisher should forward any pertinent information to Professor LeJava.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that the target audience for this next workshop topic is small businesses. Commissioner Dembowski stated that Susan Murphy of the Chamber of Commerce should be contacted to ask who had attended this presentation when the Chamber of Commerce had hosted a similar event by the same company. Commissioner Dembowski stated that news of this event should be brought to Bob Neil, who is the Manager of the Four Corners Association.

Commissioner Tolmoff entered the room at 7:35 PM.

Chair Kurfehs stated that anyone could attend this workshop, from businesses to the general public. Secretary Matte noted that it would be good to attract the general public. Commissioner

Dembowski stated that this particular presentation would connect businesses to the free tool kit that is available for consulting. The presentation is interactive. Commissioner Dembowski noted that the key is to get the small businesses to attend. Chair Kurfehs stated that the EDC can probably easily line up a year's worth of presentations. Commissioner Tolmoff suggested that these sessions be started at the beginning of the year. Chair Kurfehs stated that the presentations could be held once per month on the regular dates of the EDC meetings. Chair Kurfehs stated that this past event was listed on the Town's website and the EDC website, the bulletin boards, and was announced with the EDC newsletter. Chair Kurfehs stated that the email/contact list must be built. Chair Kurfehs stated that these workshops could also be announced in *The News Times*. Commissioner Tolmoff suggested that any event also be listed on *The Brookfield Patch*.

Chair Kurfehs stated that these events will begin in January, and Nelson Merchan will give the first presentation.

Update on New Website Functioning: There was no report.

Other Discussion: Commissioner Fisher and Secretary Matte asked E. Cole Prescott to sign them up on the Town's website to receive notices of agenda and minutes postings.

- **Metrics:** Commissioner Dembowski explained that Chair Kurfehs had sent the EDC Bethel's metrics, and Commissioner Dembowski at the last meeting had made the suggestion to start researching how other Towns determine how metrics are established. Secretary Matte stated that he had called Ridgefield, Newtown, New Fairfield and Bethel.

Secretary Matte stated that he had asked what types of metrics or assessments are used to measure economic development in each of the towns he had called. Secretary Matte noted Brookfield's Profile Page from CERC, and stated that the Economic Development Director from Bethel takes the profile page out of CERC and posts it on the website. Secretary Matte stated that this profile sheet may be relevant to help the Commission move forward in the establishment of metrics. Chair Kurfehs replied that he believes that Bethel uses actual performance metrics. Secretary Matte stated that he will speak again with Bethel regarding their economic metrics. Secretary Matte stated that in Ridgefield per his discussion, there was success with putting together a group of businesses offering discounts for any type of incentive. Secretary Matte shared his notes about these conversations with other Towns.

Secretary Matte explained that in New Fairfield, there is no Economic Development Director or Planner, but the Town uses the grand list for the purposes of metrics. Secretary Matte stated that he had been told that New Fairfield is growing.

Chair Kurfehs asked that Brookfield's Profile page from CERC be posted to the EDC website.

Commissioner Dembowski had spoken to Danbury Economic Development, and shared parts of this discussion with the Commission. Danbury does not have performance metrics. What Danbury's Economic Development Director focuses on is keeping and growing the businesses Danbury already has. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he was told this is

done in Danbury by “creating a clear path for businesses to grow and thrive in the town, and to eliminate the hurtles and the hassles.” Commissioner Dembowski mentioned that perhaps one of the needs of a Town that should be considered in regard to business growth is infrastructure. Commissioner Dembowski highlighted four points, which had been mentioned during his conversation with Danbury’s Economic Development Director:

1. Growth and attraction of business: Measure the number of new businesses coming to Town, ideally speaking.
2. How many dollars have people spent to expand their businesses in town.
3. How many new jobs in town & grand list in Town
4. Infrastructure

Chair Kurfehs stated Belimo Air Controls was built on the west side of Danbury. He also mentioned Danbury Hospital has invested \$75 million for a whole new wing area. Also, Prax Air will be adding a new building in Danbury.

Chair Kurfehs stated that he had sent a report from Danbury and Bethel, as well as Newtown to the EDC. Chair Kurfehs stated that the Commission should define what metrics would work for Brookfield, and what work is required to move this forward. Commissioner Dembowski offered to draft a template for this project to be discussed at the next meeting. Commissioner Dembowski stated that he will send an email to the Commission and collect their comments for the next meeting.

Commissioner Tolmoff asked how the Commission can let people know there is vacant business space throughout the Town, and Chair Kurfehs mentioned that this information is available on CERC. Chair Kurfehs stated that there are two other companies, LoopNet and CoStar, on which to search available commercial properties. LoopNet has a preferred service. If someone is looking from the outside and is not a preferred customer, Chair Kurfehs explained that not everything can be seen on these two sites.

Commissioner Dembowski stated that regarding the Tax incentive deferral program which is now being discussed, the Board of Selectmen had previously approved the adoption of the ordinance. At the last Board of Selectmen’s meeting, a contract agreement on how the tax deferral would be managed has been prepared and is being presented and discussed at two special Board of Selectmen meetings. Commissioner Dembowski asked that the EDC Commissioners attend these special meetings. The first meeting is tomorrow, and the second is next Tuesday, at 7:00 PM. Commissioner Fisher mentioned that the Commissioners may want to attend slightly early, to sign up for public comment. Commissioner Fisher stated that written correspondence probably could also be sent to the Board of Selectmen. Commissioner Fisher mentioned that the front buildings were to be completed in phases. Commissioner Dembowski stated that the details of the agreement will be discussed at the upcoming Board of Selectmen meetings. Chair Kurfehs stated that he will look for the talking points which he had drafted, and he will forward this document to the Commission.

- **Development Services Team:** Chair Kurfehs stated that the Town is now hosting Development Services Team meetings, which is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 8:30 AM. The purpose of this meeting is to gather together the land use officers and other services

relevant to building, fire, etc., to informally discuss proposed developments and problem areas. Chair Kurfehs mentioned that other Towns have a similar meeting process, and the EDC should be aware of what is happening in other Towns throughout the Region.

4-Corners Development Review: Chair Kurfehs stated that the Zoning Commission had recently passed a zoning regulation requiring that 60% of all ground floors would be required to have commercial use. He noted that if this formula were to be used, 50,000 square feet of retail space would be needed in the downtown area in one complex. He noted that there are not enough categories for retail, which mostly involve people who are small, undercapitalized entrepreneurs who are undercapitalized. He noted that anything that is now facing the main road must be retail on the ground floor, as recently discussed by the Zoning Commission.

Other Discussion: Chair Kurfehs mentioned that next year's EDC meeting calendar should be discussed. The following dates were mentioned, and the Commission asked E. Cole Prescott to file the following regular meeting dates with the Town Clerk's Office:

January 20th

February 17th

March 17th

April 21st

May 19th

June 16th

July 21st

August 18th

September 15th

October 20th

November 17th

December 15th

Chair Kurfehs also mentioned that nominations of officers will be held at next month's meeting.

Adjournment: Commissioner Dembowski made a motion to adjourn at 8:42 PM. Secretary Matte seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.