

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015 ROOM 209**  
**7:00 PM**

1. **Convene Meeting:** Chair Kurfehs convened the meeting at 7:05 PM with the following quorum in attendance – **Present:** Chair Kurfehs, Vice Chair Greg Dembowski, Secretary Dave Matte; Commissioner Jim Fisher; Commissioner Nancy Tolmoff
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes (03/30/15 special)** – Vice Chair Dembowski mentioned that he was not present at the last meeting. **Commissioner Fisher made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Secretary Matte seconded the motion, and it carried, with Commissioner Fisher, Secretary Matte and Chair Kurfehs voting.**
3. **Discussion of Strategy/Metrics Creation** – Vice Chair Dembowski stated that he and Chair Kurfehs had visited the Planning Commission meeting, the main agenda item of which was the review of the POCD update draft. Vice Chair Dembowski noted that he and Chair Kurfehs had spoken with Community Development Director about six weeks ago regarding the Economic Development and the POCD update. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that in this POCD there is an action item of five or six items for the EDC. Upon inquiry from Secretary Matte, both Chair Kurfehs and Vice Chair Dembowski replied that the Plan is drafted and accepted on a non-partisan basis.

Vice Chair Dembowski stated that he has checked the Google Analytics report for the EDC website. Over the past month, there were 343 visits. The average visitor visited one and a half pages. On an average day, there were three spikes in the days and two to ten visitors. Today there were 56 visitors. E. Cole Prescott mentioned that she had posted the article by Hal Kurfehs on the website on Sunday. Vice Chair Dembowski reported that eighty-three percent of the visitors were first-time visitors to the website, and the average visit was 45 seconds. Chair Kurfehs stated that he had received an email from WordPress, regarding an update to the website. E. Cole Prescott will check into the updating of the website, and will check with A. Wagner, if needed.

4. **Community Economic Development Fund: Resource Event May 20<sup>th</sup>: Cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce** – Chair Kurfehs mentioned the event on May 20<sup>th</sup>, which information was sent to Chair Kurfehs by S. Murphy, of the Brookfield Chamber of Commerce. Chair Kurfehs will draft a newsletter for this information and send it to E. Cole Prescott to be sent on the Constant Contact EDC newsletter list. *Commissioner Tolmoff entered the meeting room at 7:30 PM.*
5. **Update on Website Functioning & Newsletter Contact List:** E. Cole Prescott reported that there are 316 people on the newsletter contact list. E. Cole Prescott stated that she has added the Brookfield businesses from the Chamber of Commerce Directory to the EDC contact list. She also mentioned that she has added the emails which Vice Chair Dembowski had sent her in January. It was mentioned that these emails from the Directory were primarily updates, and not new additions. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that he will report the Google Analytics information in the future under this agenda topic.

6. **Website Home Page Layout Update** – Chair Kurfehs stated that the EDC has been attempting to help businesses in Town by either having workshops or providing information to businesses. Chair Kurfehs asked if there should be some language developed about these workshops and consultation-like services. He also mentioned the partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. Chair Kurfehs stated that the home page will either need to be re-designed a bit, or a different topic will need to be added to the bottom right of the home page to replace the business incubator highlight. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that the home page has not been changed in a year. E. Cole Prescott will check with Andrea Wagner to determine if the changes may be made to the homepage while hiding the current information about the business incubator. Commissioner Tolmoff suggested that perhaps during the summer she can start to work to connect people. Vice Chair Dembowski offered to coordinate some office space for Commissioner Tolmoff to use. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that the Library has offered some space to the EDC. Chair Kurfehs mentioned the importance of awareness of resources available throughout the community.
7. **Plan of Conservation and Development Update** – *This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.*
8. **Other Discussion** – Vice Chair Dembowski stated that the Development Services Team, a group of the Town’s Department heads and various Commissioners, meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. At the last meeting [on April 14<sup>th</sup>], Vice Chair Dembowski offered to call the three developers who owned the four largest properties in the Town. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that before he called the developers, he reviewed the Land Use Department’s records relevant to proposed developments. He has spoken with Greg Steiner, a member of the LLC, which owns the corn field at 401 Federal Road. Vice Chair Dembowski reported the following points based on his conversation with Mr. Steiner: 1.) the economy is poor, and because of this, no one is moving to Connecticut; 2.) Brookfield no longer has the reputation of being “anti-development”. 3.) Mr. Steiner mentioned that he is happy to have land here in this part of CT; 4.) even retail is slowing and big box store sales slowing because so much now can be done online. In regard to development, the only thing that might work for the corn field property is to find a small boutique store. Chair Kurfehs stated that the site at the corn field is approved for 119,000 square feet. Vice Chair Dembowski also reported that Mr. Steiner is aware of the tax deferral program, but it was not completely a positive program, as Danbury has a tax deferral system without the approval process time period of the tax deferral application, and Danbury offers a full deferral for 7 years.

Vice Chair Dembowski stated that he has attempted to contact the owner of 1055 Federal Road. Chair Kurfehs mentioned that this property is relatively far from other retail development, and an anchor tenant had never been found for the property. Vice Chair Dembowski reported that the application could be approved for a period of up to four more years, if the applicant requests an extension of the approval time period.

Vice Chair Dembowski stated that the last phone call he made was to Rizzo Construction, and he is waiting to hear back. Chair Kurfehs mentioned that all of the developers should be told that the EDC is here to help in any way it can.

Vice Chair Dembowski stated that he will report on this matter at the next Development Services Team meeting, which will be held next Tuesday. Chair Kurfehs stated that the purpose of this meeting is to have the departments work together.

**Town Center:**

Brookfield Village: Chair Kurfehs stated that the first building of Brookfield Village is scheduled to be demolished in June, which will start the construction process. The theory is to build the building out and then remove the building where Roccas is located. The idea is to keep as many tenants as possible.

The Residence at Laurel Hill: The apartments at Laurel Hill Road are almost complete. Chair Kurfehs stated that the financing has been issued through CHAFA with income limits. The rent is estimated at \$1325 a month for two bedrooms, two baths with heat included.

Laurel Hill Townhomes: There are thirteen townhomes across the street on Laurel Hill Road which are in the process of construction.

Green Acres: The financing at the Green Acres site has not yet been obtained.

Various: There are signed contracts on the Northwest quadrant, which has a part on Station Road and a part north of the bowling alley. The northern ten acres and three acres on Station Road with a connector road behind the bowling alley are the proposed areas under contract.

101-103 Laurel Hill Road: There is another development on Laurel Hill Road approved for 100 apartments and 8400 square feet of retail, and this development could start construction fairly soon.

Upon inquiry from Secretary Matte, Chair Kurfehs replied that if too much retail or office space is mandated, not all businesses will survive, because many small business owners do not need spaces of 2,000 square feet or greater; they cannot tolerate stiff competition and they are usually undercapitalized.

9. **Adjourn: Secretary Matte made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 PM, and Vice Chair Dembowski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**