

APPROVED MINUTES
BROOKFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, February 16, 2016 ROOM 209
7:00 PM

1. Convene Meeting: Chair Kurfehs convened the meeting at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance:
Present: Chair Hal Kurfehs; Vice Chair Greg Dembowski; Secretary Dave Matte; Commissioner Jim Fisher; Commissioner Mike Doré; Commissioner Paul LaTerra; Commissioner Carmine Rositano
Also Present: Dave Will, WPCA Inspector; Emily Cole Prescott, Recording Secretary
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes (01/19/16) – **Vice Chair Dembowski made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 19th. Secretary Dave Matte seconded the motion. Secretary Dave Matte, Commissioner Fisher, Commissioner Mike Doré and Chair Kurfehs voted in favor of the motion, and it carried.**
3. Welcome to new EDC members Paul LaTerra and Carmine Rositano – Newly appointed Commission members Paul LaTerra and Carmine Rositano introduced themselves. Vice Chair Dembowski suggested that all Commissioners view the Commission’s website, brookfieldedc.org, and become familiar with the information. E. Cole Prescott will be making some updates to the links on the site, and asked that if any Commissioners see links that need to be updated, to let her know. Chair Kurfehs also encouraged members to view the accesswesternct.com, to view the various resources and links. Vice Chair Dembowski also suggested that training is made available for the new Commissioners. Vice Chair Dembowski and Chair Kurfehs briefly explained that the purpose of the EDC is to recommend and make suggestions to other Boards and Commissions in the Town.
The Commission moved to discussion of item 5 at this time.
4. Discussion with Brookfield Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Susan Queenan – Susan Queenan was not present. Chair Kurfehs asked that this item be included on the next agenda, and that Susan Queenan also be sent a copy of the agenda and correspondence for that meeting.
5. Consideration of Budget Needs for 2016-2017 Fiscal Year (continued from 01/19 meeting) – Commissioner Fisher noted that the EDC’s budget is not high. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that money for CERC membership should be planned, as well as some money for web updates that cannot be handled in-house. Vice Chair Dembowski suggested \$300 is planned for web updates. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that the Commission would probably prefer not to renew the Business Incubator Association membership. Upon inquiry, Vice Chair Dembowski briefly explained that the same concept has been done in locations so near to the Town, that the Commission decided not to pursue creating its own incubator for the Town, as its residents may regionally participate using available resources. Chair Kurfehs stated that he will follow up with Town Controller Leverage.
6. Update on Website Functioning & Newsletter Contact List – Vice Chair Dembowski stated that he and E. Cole Prescott have been discussing website updates. E. Cole Prescott stated that she has compiled a list of links that need to be updated, and will begin to work on those updates. Vice Chair Dembowski asked that Paul LaTerra and Carmine Rositano

send their phone numbers for posting on the website to E. Cole Prescott. Vice Chair Dembowski shared the Google Analytics report for the month with the Commission. There has been an average of one to three hits per day. Traffic significantly increases generally around the time the Commission posts news or adds updates to the site. Eighty-percent of visitors were first-time visitors. The purpose of the Business Directory was also briefly discussed, and E. Cole Prescott stated that she will also be updating the Business Directory to remove businesses which have since closed.

7. Information for News & “Blurb” Write-Ups: Articles available on *The Patch* – Although there are no new stories from *The Patch* to post, the press release about accesswesternct.com should be posted to the website, as should the article *Urban vs. Suburban*, both listed below, as part of item 8.
8. Other Discussion
Streetscape Update: Vice Chair Dembowski gave an update about the ongoing Streetscape Project. Vice Chair Dembowski stated that there is now verbal approval from the DOT to complete phase one of the project, which would include 8 ft. sidewalks, snow curbs, granite curbing, parallel parking, 33 New England style streetscape lights, bigger and longer turning lanes for the Brookfield Village buildings. Vice Chair Dembowski mentioned that the Town is now currently reviewing the feasibility of moving to underground power in the Town Center. Vice Chair Dembowski reviewed the financials of the project. After Vice Chair Dembowski presented his update, he recused himself from any further discussion on the matter.

Commissioner Fisher expressed concerns about pursuing underground power, citing both the high expense, and the possibility of delay to developer. He also was concerned about extra expense the developers would have to incur. Commissioner Fisher suggested that the EDC state an opinion on the matter. Commissioner Fisher stated that he would like the Town to have underground utilities, but with the expense, he does not think this is a project the Town will pay for.

Chair Kurfehs mentioned that developers have a construction budget, and there are many projects throughout Town that have been approved, but not yet built. Chair Kurfehs also noted that the primary attraction to the area for commercial space will be smaller businesses.

The noted benefits of underground power include increased property values for the area, and beautification of the area. It was mentioned that in conjunction with the telephone poles, other utilities will also need to be put underground.

Secretary Matte expressed concerns about the Commission not being open-minded to the idea, and asked that the Commission look into the matter, and possibly have a conversation with First Selectman Dunn about the project. Chair Kurfehs suggested that the Commissioners separately write down their questions. The Commission agreed to invite First Selectman Steve Dunn to the next meeting, on March 15th.

- Article – *Urban vs. Suburban* published in *The News Times* - Chair Kurfehs noted this article, and the fact that the 25-49 age group is declining in suburban areas, so

most towns are encouraging improvements to downtown developments, as these areas are as close to the urban lifestyle as possible for Towns. This article will be posted to the EDC website.

- Media Release: AccessWesternCT.com – *As noted above, this item will be posted to the website.*

Upon inquiry from D. Will about what the EDC has done to promote businesses throughout the Town and not just in the Town Center, Chair Kurfefs replied that the EDC has two goals – to retain current businesses and help them grow and to encourage new businesses. The Commission has set up the Business Directory for full business contact information to be posted. He noted the importance of regional plans and resources in this process. Chair Kurfefs stated that the Commission is voluntary, and one of the previous recommendations of the Commission had been to hire a Planner.

9. Adjournment: **Vice Chair Dembowski made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 PM. Commissioner Rositano seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.**

Next regularly scheduled Economic Development Commission meeting: 03/15/16