



Town of Madison, CT

Economic Development Commission

Draft

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on January 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m. at the Town Campus

Present: Commissioners Ryan Duques, Matt Bloom, Eric Dillner, Anne Foley, Lisa Miksis, Mark Steffen, Jonathon Stein

Also present: Dave Anderson, Town Planner; Christin Cohen, State Senator; Ginny Kozlowski, CEO Rex; Barbara Malmberg, Project Manager, Rex; Mike Barnes, East River Landing Marina project

Mr. Duques called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Election of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. On motion made Ms. Miksis, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to elect Ryan Duques as Chairman of the Economic Development Commission.

On motion made by Ms. Foley, and seconded by Mr. Duques, the Commission voted unanimously to elect Lisa Miksis as Vice-Chairman of the Economic Development Commission.

On motion made by Mr. Bloom, and seconded by Mr. Duques, the Commission voted unanimously to elect Mark Steffen as Secretary of the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Duques introduced Eric Dillner and Jonathon Stein as new members to the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Duques requested that the agenda be opened to recognize and thank Jim Ball, an outgoing member of the Commission.

Representative Cohen presented Mr. Ball with a citation from the Connecticut General Assembly congratulating and thanking him for his 15 years of dedicated public service. She noted that he has served as a model for public service as a member of the Economic Development Commission and as a liaison with the State with efforts to bring the State Economic Development Commissioner and DOT Commissioner to meet with the Madison EDC.

1 Approval of minutes of regular meeting, December 12, 2019. On motion made by Mr. Bloom and seconded by Ms. Miksis, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 12, 2019 as submitted.

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3. Public comment. There was no discussion under public comment.

4. REX Presentation. Ginny Kozlowski and Barbara Malmberg were present from Rex, as one step in the development of the 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which is a requirement for Rex to receive State funding. She noted that Rex policy provides that representatives visit all of the participating towns in January and February and in April they give their annual presentation to COG, building up to their presentation to the State in June. They cover the area from Milford to the west, Madison to the east and Meriden to the north. During the meetings the towns are encouraged to become certified in the CEDAS Best Practices Program. Mr. Duques noted that Madison has already been certified.

Ms. Kozlowski reported on demographic data on the area, which shows that population is relatively flat, medium household income is flat, and the median age in the region is increasing. Ms. Kozlowski then commented on items that are of concern for the region including a limited amount of land available for development and high remediation costs if clean-up is necessary on a piece of land. Rex is putting together an inventory for laboratories and office space available in the region. They are working with the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce and also received an ECIC grant and funding from the Regional Water Authority for business outreach.

Ms. Kozlowski reviewed a list of the region's largest employers, which include Yale at the top of the list. It is significant that the list also shows that 95% of the businesses in the region are small businesses. She also noted that their research shows a workforce need for health care workers and hospitality workers for the hospitality industry and coders for the technology industry. They are also partnering with UHN and Gateway for job training.

Ms. Kozlowski noted that a major issue in the region is the aging population, which continues to increase. One area that is impacted by the aging population is housing as it impacts seniors who want to remain in their home and younger residents in need of housing that will eventually become available as seniors move into smaller residences. There is a Housing Committee looking at this issue and working on developing housing for both the aging and younger population to help maintain a stable population. In response to a question by Mr. Stein, Ms. Kozlowski noted that currently, suburban towns are losing population, while cities are growing.

Ms. Kozlowski reviewed the importance of infrastructure from the region including air and rail. Energy is another area that is important to economic development in the region and they are working on an Energy Plan. They will continue working on transit oriented development. They are also investigating 5G to get improved internet service with a focus on the needs of in-home businesses.

The New Haven port currently is primarily utilized for metal and petroleum and they are working on having the Corps of Engineers look at dredging the port to expand options for port use. In the

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area of land options for development, they are working on seeking funding from Brownfield properties and are also working on antiquated zoning issues in communities. Towns are encouraged to become certified sustainable.ct. Marketing efforts include stakeholder's education and the development of a visitor's guide.

Ms. Kozlowski highlighted the upcoming 2020 census noting that they are working and pushing for a complete count. Connecticut is a donor state with funding at \$4,000/resident so it is important to count everyone who is living in Connecticut in March when the data is collected.

Ms. Kozlowski provided members with her contact information and encouraged members to contact her with any questions. She also noted that the presentation provided this evening is on the Rex website at www.rexdevelopment.com.

Mr. Stein questioned if there are any towns that could serve as a model for how a community has been able to successfully make a change in its demographics but Ms. Kozlowski noted that she is not aware of a town that has been able to find a solution to this issue. Mr. Duques noted that Madison is currently working on some options including continuing taking steps to become a vibrant community so people of all demographics will want to remain and come to Madison with a special focus on young people.

5. Discussion on 2020 Priorities.

- a. Recruitment
- b. Marketing Madison
- c. Wastewater Study
- d. Other

Mr. Duques noted that he had included discussion on 2020 priorities on the agenda to gain Commission input on ideas that will provide a few items to focus on in the upcoming year. Ideas that have been discussed include continued efforts to improve business recruitment, marketing projects and a wastewater study. Currently Madison is involved with the regional economic development with 5 towns and has contributed to a fund for this group to work on projects. One of their priorities will be a marketing effort for the region. The initial project involves a survey and the results produced will be used to develop these priorities. Efforts will be made to meet with different companies to be able to obtain input in person and also gain insight into the needs of these businesses. This will also serve to make a connection with businesses to show the towns' support and desire to offer assistance as needed. The information gathered will be used to come up with a recruitment strategy which could be helpful when sites become available. He asked for Commission input on other ideas to include as 2020 priorities.

Mr. Dillner recommended that the Commission consider a focus on the issue of demographics and how the area's population and demographics are shifting. One issue impacted by the change

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in population is housing and he suggested that a housing needs assessment would be an important tool to have available for reference. Mr. Anderson noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission is working on the housing issue. Mr. Duques suggested that Mr. Dillner and Mr. Stein serve as an EDC liaison to Planning and Zoning on the topic of demographics and housing.

Mr. Steffen indicated an interest in the issue of waste water, noting that any discussion on housing density is a waste water issue. Mr. Duques agreed that this is an important issue and suggested that the Commission work to do a study and come up with a proposal and recommendation regarding the waste water issue by the end of the year. Mr. Steffen agreed to serve as the liaison for the waste water project.

Mr. Barnes noted that East Lyme is working on a sewer program and it is very expensive and is having an impact on the housing market in the town.

Mr. Duques noted that other ideas will come up throughout the year and the Commission will have an opportunity to discuss these ideas and possibly develop proposals for projects. It will be important that the Commission continue its efforts to provide support in appropriate areas whenever possible.

Mr. Anderson noted that the Board of Education is working on a marketing project for Madison and he believes it would be important to work in partnership with them to include the Town in addition to the schools.

Mr. Duques noted that Mike Barnes was present to talk about his project at 4 Boston Post Road and to ask for Commission support of this project. He requested that the Commission add this item to the agenda.

On motion made by Mr. Steffen, and seconded by Mr. Duques, the Commission voted unanimously to add to the agenda "Discuss for Possible Action Proposal for Development at 4 Boston Post Road.

Mr. Barnes noted that his family has owned this property, which is located on the south side of Route 1 on the Guilford/Madison line, for 50 years. He has submitted a proposal to recreate a project in this location that existed many years ago. This used to be the site of a marina and a restaurant and the area was an economic center. He has conducted a substantial amount of historical research on the property and information has been made available on a facebook page. The buildings and facilities were taken down in 1970 when a portion of the property was taken by eminent domain for the widening of Route 1 His proposed project provides for 36 marina slips and a 1200 sf building which includes a 20 seat restaurant, and apartment and office with the primary use being the marina. There were some concerns regarding the septic issue but this has

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been resolved. He is confident that this project will provide a revitalization of the East River area and will provide upland and river access.

Mr. Barnes noted that the water side of the property has been approved at the local level and he will be obtaining a variance for building to allow it to be closer to the water.

Mr. Anderson noted that Mr. Barnes has submitted his application and had a presentation on the project. Next Tuesday the ZBA will hear his variance application for the building location. The next step will be for the Planning and Zoning Commission to have a hearing on the project application.

Mr. Duques questioned if Mr. Barnes was prepared to move forward with the project if approvals are received at the local level. Mr. Barnes noted that he is committed to the project but did note that, at the State level, he is not allowed to do any construction work in the water from March – August due to environmental concerns so he will need a quick approval to be able to move forward with the project this year.

In response to a question by Ms. Miksis, Mr. Barnes noted that he is totally committed and passionate about the project and this is his driving force. He noted that the only obstacle he is encountering is from people with environmental concerns but he is confident that these can be overcome.

Mr. Duques recommended that the Commission indicate its' support for the application by Mr. Barnes for the East River Revitalization project at 4 Boston Post Road.

On motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to support the application of Mike Barnes for the concept of the East River Revitalization Project at 4 Boston Post Road, from an economic development and Town vibrancy perspective, as presented by Mr. Barnes.

6. Board Reports (BOS, BOF, Planning and Zoning Mr. Anderson noted that there had been a meeting with a biopower anaerobic facility that has developed a system to handle commercial and household food waste. They have a larger facility in Southington but are looking at options for small facilities for collection to be transported to the larger facility. This is a potential \$1.5 million project. The Guilford/Madison area is one area under consideration.

Mr. Anderson reported that Representative Cohen had requested input on transportation priority projects for the area and he advised her that a second platform at the train station should be a high priority project for Madison. A letter has been drafted to encourage the Governor to put this project back into the Transportation Plan so there is hope that this project could move forward.

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In response to a question by Mr. Stein, Mr. Anderson noted that the train station is owned by the Department of Transportation and Amtrak operates the train for the State under State subsidy.

Mr. Anderson advised of a potential solar project on the driving range site, which would create electricity to go back to the grid. The project has to be approved by the Connecticut Siting Council. The project will also go to PZC to see if they have any concerns.

Mr. Duques noted that he has been in contact with CERC and UConn to see if they would be interested in helping with setting up a Community Space Availability and Utilization System for residents to be able to know the Town venues that are available and how to access them for use. He has requested Board of Selectmen assistance to look at implementation of an electronic reservation system and they have been supportive with the Technology Department. The First Selectman has indicated her support to move this project forward and Mr. Anderson noted that the Technology Department is actively working on setting up a system. Mr. Duques noted that the Town should be receiving a proposal from CERC to assist with evaluating the spaces available, hours of operation, and utilization statistics. In October, the Commission had noted that there is a lack of utilization data and having this data would be helpful in moving forward with insuring appropriate use of Town venues. He believes that having a system in place to let the community know options for use of Town facilities and space is another step in improving the vibrancy of the town for its residents.

In response to a question, Mr. Anderson agreed to provide a copy of the Economic Development Action Plan to the two new EDC members. This plan will be helpful to them to provide background information and assist them in understanding where the EDC is hoping to move forward in the future.

7. Old Business. There was no discussion under old business.

8. New Business. Mr. Anderson requested that an item be added to the agenda to discuss for possible action applications submitted under the Town of Madison Tax Incentive Program Policy.

On motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Mr. Steffen, the Commission voted unanimously to add to the agenda, discuss for possible action applications submitted under Town of Madison Tax Incentive Program Policy.

Mr. Anderson noted that, in May, 2018 the Economic Development Commission and the Board of Selectmen had approved a Town of Madison Tax Incentive Program Policy which established a process for granting tax incentives in Madison and to establish eligibility criteria for the incentives. The purpose is to provide the ability for a business to phase in a tax increase for a project that has economic value to the Town. This program is able to help businesses increase

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their investment in their business and helps encourage development which is an economic benefit to the Town. The procedure involves an application being filed with the Director of Planning and Economic Development and the application being forwarded to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Economic Development Commission, Director of Finance and the Town Assessor for review and comment. Letters of intent to file an application for two projects have been submitted and are being provided to the EDC for comment. The application will have to go through the other approval with the final approval for the program being Town Meeting.

Mr. Anderson noted that the first application will be from Milano Development for their new small business park at 175 Fort Path Road, which includes five approved buildings featuring commercial, industrial, flex and self-storage space. This small business park will provide a home for local businesses and jobs in Madison. The estimated incremental increase of real estate to the grand list is \$1.8 million. The second application will be from Overshore Associates for a project at 64 Wall Street, which consists of a 3 ½ story mixed use building with 3,887 sq ft of office space and two (2) two bedroom apartments. The estimated incremental increase of real estate to the grand list is \$700,000. Mr. Anderson requested that the EDC take action to indicate its support for these two applications.

Mr. Duques noted that since the actual applications have not been submitted the Commission can indicate its support of the applications in concept.

On motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Mr. Dillman, the Commission voted unanimously to support, in concept, the application of Milano Development and Overshore Associates, LLC for the Town of Madison Tax Incentive Program, since review of their projects indicates that they meet the criteria for the program, and the Commission looks forward to receipt of the full details of the applications once they have been submitted.

In response to a question by Mr. Duques regarding the timeline, Mr. Anderson noted that he will research how the timeline is handled in other towns. He noted that they may want to consider a trial system based on a project but allowing for flexibility will be important.

9. Adjournment. On motion made by Mr. Bloom, and seconded by Ms. Foley, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley
Clerk