



# Town of Madison, CT

---

## Economic Development Commission

Subject to Approval

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on March 10, 2022, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Videoconferencing

Present: Commissioners Jonathan Stein, Ryan Duques, Matt Bloom, Lisa Miksis

Also present: Bruce Wilson, Board of Selectman; Justin Murphy, Board of Finance; Sheri Cote, Economic Development Director

Dr. Stein called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes of regular meeting February 17, 2022. On motion made by Mr. Bloom, and seconded by Mr. Duques, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 17, 2022 as corrected.

Page 1, Item 3, misspelling of name “Mannix”

Page 5, Item 7d, second bullet under Site Improvement Grants, “Mr. Steffen” should be “Mr. Bloom” in line four and line 6.

2. Public comment. There were no public comments.

### OLD BUSINESS

3. MLAC Update: (Marijuana Legalization Ad Hoc Committee).

Dr. Stein noted that Mr. Steffen was unable to attend the meeting and he is the Economic Development Commission representative to the MLAC, so there is no update.

Mr. Wilson noted that a public hearing is scheduled for March 15th at 7:00 p.m. via zoom to discuss this topic. The goal is to have a back and forth discussion with input from experts.

### NEW BUSINESS

4. EDC Budget – Funding expires 6/30/22.

- a. **Start Up Grant(s)**
  - i. **Arts Festival**
  - ii. **Film Festival**
  - iii. **Other?**

2-Minutes of a regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on March 10, 2022

Ms. Cote noted that the EDC budget will expire on 6/30/22. There is a need for the Commission to discuss possible projects to finance with the available budget funds. One idea that has been discussed was signage but the costs for a signage campaign are now being proposed to be covered by ARPA funds.

Other ideas for consideration include:

1. Start-Up Grants for special community events such as an Arts Festival or Film Festival.
2. A Tourism Campaign such as a digital ad campaign and a special event such as a beach fire pit event.

Ms. Miksis commented that she likes the idea of a fire pit event for the community but she would recommend that this be a Chamber of Commerce sponsored event. She supports the idea of supporting small businesses with start-up grants. Ms. Cote noted that she had discussed the idea of a Car Show on Main Street as a possible new event for the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Duques commented that he agrees with Ms. Miksis on the idea of any new special events being initiated by the Chamber of Commerce. He does not believe that the Economic Development has the staff to organize and sponsor a large community event. He would, however, support the idea of partnering with the Chamber with a special event. Regarding the fire pit event, he believes it might be more appropriate to provide funds to establish a fire pit but then leave it to the Chamber and Town agencies to plan and hold events. He agrees with the idea of funds being earmarked for grants for start-up businesses.

Dr. Stein suggested that consideration also be given to providing start-up grants to arts related groups to host a new event.

- b. **Tourism.**
  - i. **Digital Ad Campaign**
  - ii **Beach Fire Pit**

Mr. Bloom commented that he could support a number of the special events or grant programs discussed above. He also believes that a digital ad campaign could be a very beneficial project that fits in well with the Commission's mission.

Ms. Cote proposed the idea of marketing a shuttle bus from Hammonasset to the downtown area utilizing the services of the 9-Town Transit District bus service. She noted that this service was sponsored by the State last year and a total of 250 rides were provided over the summer. Mr. Duques commented that he believes EDC funds could be used in more productive ways than transporting visitors to the downtown area. When this service was offered in the past it was not well utilized.

3-Minutes of a regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on March 10, 2022

Dr. Stein indicated his support for the idea of a digital ad campaign which could have a fairly short turn-around time. In the past the Commission has worked with Seal Creatives to help with marketing and they could be of assistance with these efforts. Ms. Cote suggested that the first step be to identify the activities the Town would like to highlight such as the concert series. The Commission members were in agreement to utilize EDC funds for a digital ad campaign utilizing the services of a marketing firm such as Seal Creatives to move this project forward. Dr. Stein and Ms. Cote will work together on moving this project forward.

Mr. Murphy noted that he has seen a Connecticut advertisement promoting the State and he suggested that the agency that puts this together be contacted to see if a scene from Madison could be profiled in the next promotional commercial. Mr. Duques suggested that the State Tourism agency be contacted with this request.

5. EDC Director Update.

.a **Grant Proposals.**

i. **Façade Improvement Grant Proposal.**

Dr. Stein noted that at the last meeting, he and Mr. Bloom had agreed to review the draft of the ARPA proposal. The ARPA Committee met today and there appears to be some duplication of effort so there is a need for further follow-up.

ii. **Madison COVID Impact Grants for Nonprofits.**

Ms. Cote noted that she had met with a representative with the Greater New Haven District and they were able to share some information to help Madison put together a questionnaire for businesses. She is also working on a data base of businesses and their contact information. Ms. Miksis noted that the Chamber of Commerce has developed a comprehensive list of local businesses and might be willing to share their list.

.b **Business Retention and Expansion.**

Ms. Cote noted that, at the request of the First Selectwoman, she has joined as a member of the Madison Chamber of Commerce and this will help her with the development of a relationship with businesses. Austin Hall is also a member of the Chamber representing the Town. She is also working on putting together a schedule to meet with local business with the First Selectwoman or members of the Economic Development Commission.

.c **Director/EDC Collaboration.**

4-Minutes of a regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on March 10, 2022

**i. Town/Business Meet and Greet.**

Ms. Cote noted that she realizes that she has barriers in finding the best ways to carry out the duties of her position in the best and most effective possible way. Since she doesn't live in Madison she requested the assistance of the Economic Development Commission members to provide information on the places, activities or items that the Commission would like to see promoted.

Ms. Cote also proposed the idea of an EDC sponsored Meet and Greet to give businesses and business leaders an opportunity to meet her, the members of the EDC and other Town officials and staff. The Surf Club might be a nice location for this type of event. Mr. Duques agreed to reach out to his contact with the Chamber of Commerce to see if they would have any interest in working with the EDC on a Meet and Greet event.

Ms. Cote advised that the company hired for the Light Up Madison Project came to Madison to remove the lights on Wall Street but it is the Town's responsibility to remove the lights on Main Street. The Selectmen's Office will take on responsibility to make sure this work is completed. She suggested that the Town consider issuing an RFP late spring for the Light Up Madison Project for 2022 since the vendors who do this work are getting busier. Ms. Cote also advised that the Selectmen's Office has also approved payment of the outstanding invoice for the 2021 project from Board of Selectmen funds. She suggested that the Town consider issuing an RFP late spring for the Light Up Madison Project for 2022 since the vendors who do this work are getting busier as more towns look to provide light displays around the holidays.

Dr. Stein advised that Eric Dillner has stepped down as a member of the Economic Development Commission but would like to continue to participate as a consultant as time allows. He hopes that a new member will be appointed soon to make it easier to ensure that meetings will have a quorum.

8. Adjournment. On motion made by Mr. Duques, and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Terry Holland-Buckley  
Clerk