



# Town of Madison, CT

---

## Economic Development Commission

Subject to Approval

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on April 13, 2023, 7:00 p.m. at the Madison Town Campus and via zoom

Present: Commissioners Jonathan Stein, Matt Bloom, Tom Hummel, Lindsay Johnson, Gregg Wagner, Andrew Weed; Justin Murphy, Board of Finance; Sheri Cote, Economic Development Director

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

1. Introduction.

Each of the Commission members introduced themselves and provided background information on their careers, their time as a resident of Madison, and their interest in serving on the Economic Development Commission.

2. Approval of minutes of regular meeting of March 9, 2023.

On motion made by Mr. Wood, and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 9, 2023 as corrected.

**CORRECTIONS:**

Page 1, Item 4, 6th bullet, “Shedding” should be :Shredding”

Page 3, Item , second paragraph, second line “memes” should be “members”

Page 3, Item 7, first line, should read “In response to a question by Dr. Stein, Mr. Wagner noted that the Academy Advisory Committee

3. Public Comment.

There were no public comments.

4. Chamber of Commerce Report.

There was no Chamber of Commerce Report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

5. Grant Program Update.

Ms. Cote noted that at the last meeting the Commission had approved projects totaling \$24,425 for the Grant Program. The original request for funding for this program was \$60,000 and a total of \$30,000 was approved from ARPA funds. With the 12 approved Round 1 projects totaling

\$24,425 approved at the March meeting, there is currently a balance of \$14,425 available for Round 2 applications, which were due April 1st. A request for additional funding for this successful program has been submitted and will be considered at the Board of Selectmen's meeting next Monday.

Ms. Cote reviewed the 8 new applications received from Round 2 and requested that the Commission consider approving a number of requests, approve other requests pending receipt of additional funds and there is one application that has some questionable issues related to the request.

- J Horton Store is requesting \$2,500 for repairs and patio plantings on their facade
- North Madison Congregational Church is requesting \$2,500 to repair their ADA accessible wheelchair ramp
- Madison Historical Society is requesting \$2,500 for signage
- Junk-2 Junque is requesting \$1,000 for a brick walkway and patio. Ms. Cote noted that there is concern about moving forward with this project because this area might be disrupted near the fire station as a part of the Town Center Project and could end up being a part of the demolition work.
- Deux Bisous is requesting \$2,500 to repair their awning and for signage
- Clam Castle - Taco Pacifico is requesting \$2,500 for signage
- Donohue's is requesting \$2,500 for signage
- CT Vision Center/Envision is requesting \$2,500 for signage. Ms. Cote noted that the owner had applied for funding for the first round but the application was never received so she has resubmitted for Round 2. There was concern expressed that the Vision Center project was not oriented enough to beautification.

In discussion, the Commission members agreed it would be appropriate to deny the request of Junk 2 Junque since it is possible that the work would need to be demolished as part of the Town Center Project.

Mr. Wagner expressed concern with funding the Donohue's signage request because it is his understanding that this business is for sale so the name could possibly be changed, which could make a new sign obsolete.

Since the available funds are limited, a suggestion was made to plan to focus on projects that are the most directed at economic development-oriented projects which would be businesses, and to hold off funding on the other projects until a decision is made whether additional funding is to be provided.

Mr. Murphy commented that he had understood all of the ARPA funds have been allocated but Ms. Cole commented that she believes there are still requests receiving consideration.

To reduce the number of requests to be able to fund the projects that are most related to economic development, and also are not in danger of having a short-term use, the following was proposed:

- Deny the request from Junk 2 Junque at this time since this project could have a short term use due to the Madison Center project.
- Deny the Donohue's request since the business is possibly for sale and the name could be changed after funds are expended for a new sign.

- Deny the Madison Historic Society project because it is a non-profit rather than a business request.
- Deny the North Madison Congregational Church project because it is a non-profit rather than a business request.

This would leave four business projects, including J. Horton, Deux Bisous, Clam Castle-Taco Pacifico and CT Vision Center, who could receive equal amounts of the current available funds with the understanding that if additional funding is received, these projects will receive additional funding up to the maximum of \$2,500. In addition, if adequate additional funds are received the North Madison Congregational Church and Historical Society projects will also be fully funded.

Mr. Bloom suggested that additional consideration be given to the North Madison Congregational Church project since it is an ADA Compliant project.

Dr. Stein noted that this portion of ARPA funds was provided to the EDC to make funds primarily available for businesses. Non-profit organizations had an opportunity previously to apply through the Town directly for eligible projects through ARPA so he believes the focus for these funds should be prioritized to businesses.

It was also suggested that the status of Donohue's be clarified and that funding be considered if the signage would be a long-term use.

In response to a question, Ms. Cote noted that in Guilford the business grant program only included two rounds and did not become an on-going program.

Ms. Cote suggested that another criterion to consider in prioritizing projects is the amount of money the business is also investing in the project.

After discussion, on motion made by Dr. Stein, and seconded by Mr. Bloom, the Commission voted unanimously to approve four Round 2 grant applications for the EDC Grant program for a total of \$14,425, to be divided equally among the four projects listed in the applications received for J Horton Store, Deux Bisous, Clam Castle – Taco Pacifico, and CT Vision Center, and to be divided equally among five projects if a determination is made that the Donohue's project should also be funded, with the understanding that all of these projects will be supplemented up to a maximum of \$2,500 each if adequate additional funding is received and to also approve funding for the North Madison Congregational Church application if adequate additional funding is approved for this program and to deny the applications of Junk 2 Junque and the Madison Historical Society at this time.

#### 6. Academy Advisory Committee Update.

Mr. Wagner noted that he had forwarded a copy of the Academy Committee presentation to the Commission members. He noted that the Committee has been focusing its efforts on developing a design recommendation that incorporates the input provided by the community on what residents would want to see included and accommodated in a Community Center. He noted that the report by Colliers is available and an architect has been selected and is working on plans to be able to show what the facility would look like as completed. The Advisory Committee will be meeting in conjunction with the Building Committee moving forward.

7 POCD Update.

Mr. Wood commented that there has not been a large response to the request made for questions regarding the Plan of Conservation and Development. At this point there does not appear to be a clear path on where the project is currently heading. Ms. Cote noted that the representatives of the POCD and Strategic Plan have had discussions on the best way to work together with the Strategic Plan taking the lead. She believes there will be more intense planning taking place as the Strategic Plan consultant gets more engaged. She noted that some of the staff members on the POCD Committee will be moved to the Advisory Committee which is now being established. Mr. Wood will remain as the EDC liaison to the POCD.

8. Business Retention.

Ms. Cote noted that she and Mr. Hummel had met with two local businesses including a clothing store and a bank. Both meetings were very successful and appreciated by the businesses. The bank meeting included meeting the commercial loan officer and much important information was gained on both sides. She will be scheduling two more meetings for this month and she invited Commission members to sign up to attend with her.

9. EDC Business Breakfast & Chamber Conference.

Ms. Cote noted that a date for the EDC Breakfast has not yet been set and she will update the Commission members once a date, most likely in May or June, is established.

Ms. Cote noted that the EDC presence at the Chamber of Commerce Business Expo was very successful. She showed members a picture of the booth and had samples of the documents including the Business Resource Guide and Tourism Site Information and surveys including the Transportation Survey and Cannabis Survey, that had been available at the booth. She thanked the EDC members who had assisted with manning the space that day. Participation at this event provided good exposure for the Commission. The First Selectwoman was very pleased that the EDC was represented at this event.

Dr. Stein agreed that the booth representation at the Expo activity was very successful, however, he does not feel that coverage is needed in the future for the after-conference activities when there was little activity at the booth.

Ms. Cote noted that the Chamber had expressed interest in working on the event jointly with the EDC next year.

10. Strategic Plan Update.

Discussion on the Strategic Plan took place under Item #7, Plan of Conservation and Development

**NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Stein noted that Mr. Duques had made him aware of two businesses in Town that were looking to expand and he suggested that the Commission contact them to see if the EDC can provide any support. Dr. Stein commented that he agrees it is appropriate for the EDC to offer

support for businesses expansion but questioned if it would be appropriate for the Commission to approach a business. Mr. Bloom suggested that he feels it would be appropriate for the EDC to invite a business to attend an EDC meeting to discuss expansion plans. In response to a question by Mr. Wood Dr. Stein noted that in the past the Commission had sent a letter of support for business expansion projects.

In response to a question by Mr. Hummel, Ms. Cote noted that new businesses do not have to register with the Town if they have a state registration number. There is no formal notification of a new business so she normally learns about them from staff meetings, word of mouth, or newspaper articles.

Mr. Bloom suggested a possible way the Town could get notified of new Madison businesses that are registered with the state.

On motion made by Mr. Bloom, and seconded by Mr. Wagner, the Economic Development Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM

11. Adjournment.

On motion made by Mr. Bloom, and seconded by Mr. Wagner, the Economic Development Commission meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Holland-Buckley