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Town of East Haven, CT  
Economic Development Commission  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022  
Meeting 7:00 PM

**1. Call meeting to order/roll call**

Called meeting to order at 7:05pm by Chairwoman Lorrie Maiorano, roll call taken by clerk

**Present:**

Chairwoman, Lorrie Maiorano  
Commissioner John Tarducci  
Commissioner Steve DeLucia

**Also present:**

Michelle Benivegna, Town of East Haven  
Tina Hedley, Clerk

**Absent:**

Commissioner Mohan Chugani  
Vice Chairman Joe Bittner

**2. Pledge of allegiance**

**3. Approval of past minutes from July 14, 2022.**

Commissioner Steve DeLucia made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from July 14, 2022, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner John Tarducci, none opposed, no abstentions, all in favor, motion carries.

**4. Correspondence**

No correspondence at this time.

**5. Guest speaker, Courtney Hendricson from Advance CT.**

Agenda item #5 will be revisited after agenda items, 6 and 7.

## **6. Public Comment**

No Public Comment at this time.

## **7. Other Business to come before the committee.**

Chairwoman Lorrie Maiorano confirmed the next meeting dates for the rest of year, 2022, with the commission. These dates have been confirmed with the East Haven Senior Center. These dates listed below are for the last Wednesday of the month. Chairwoman Maiorano let the commission know a vote will take place for the following year to think of what days of the week work best for everyone with the next year's schedule of commission meetings.

- October 26<sup>th</sup>
- November 30<sup>th</sup>
- December 28<sup>th</sup>

### ***Back to Agenda item #5.***

A presentation was made by Courtney Hendricson from Advance CT.  
A copy of the presentation will be attached to the minutes.

**Courtney from Advance CT made her presentation to the commission. Below outlines topics discussed. Please see attached presentation for additional information.**

- Towns Assets, challenges, game changers
- Demographics, employment and commuting, fiscal health and housing
- Economic Development, what is it and why it is important
- Who is on your economic development team, and its responsibility
- Character of your community
- What do you control locally
- Relationships with businesses
- Successful economic development, planning, marketing
- Increasing value in your community, physically, socially, economically

### **Topics that were discussed in further detail by the commission, their questions and discussions are highlighted below:**

Commissioner John Tarducci said he recently learned our town's high school offers programs, 5 or 6 tracks, medical, metal, woodwork, digital, automotive, digital. Some of our students are working with YALE. Chairwoman Lorrie Maiorano thought it was called "manual arts program" that they start at 9<sup>th</sup> grade and they partner with local technical schools.

Michelle Benivegna mentioned, (CTE) CT technical – the Town of East Haven assisted with setting up students with businesses in town, being part of the program mentioned. Examples;

Whispering Pines and an Accountant, trying to get them job exposure early, to see if they like and have interest in what they chose to pursue. Michelle Benivegna touched on the strong culinary program and, that the high school is building a mechanical wing.

Chairwoman Lorrie Maiorano asked Courtney, if a business was interested in what Advance CT had to offer, how do they partner with Advance CT.

Courtney answered with, Advance CT would meet with them to have conversations necessary to learn about the business and what resources and what direction would be needed. A warm introduction is made and depending on the business's needs they direct the business in that right direction. Small/Medium size business, they customize their solutions, see if they can help in house partner with others in their network. Chairwoman Lorrie Maiorano confirmed that the business would help any business in town that may have a struggle of any sort. Commissioner John Tarducci asked if the business needed to have a certain revenue to partake.

Commissioner Steve DeLucia asked, when Advance CT does get involved with Economic Development in a town, what do you do, do you do some sort of a study of the town?

Courtney Answered with, we do as much as we can at no cost. We meet with the town Economic Development representatives; you would tell us the challenges that you're facing; help develop a plan again at no cost.

Courtney also explained east town has a CT Town profile, a 2-page PDF with demographic and economic information. That this is what a business would be looking at If a business is looking into a specific community for their business. You can ask Advance CT for this information or if assistance is needed. Courtney also added that fiscal health is important and housing.

**East Haven Profile for reference:**

<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/cerc-pdfs/2021/East-Haven.pdf>

Housing was discussed during the presentation by Cortney and the commission.

Michelle Benivegna, who is a representative for the Town of East Haven's Housing Authority, which the town's currently working on affordable housing plan. We do not hear much about housing for the workforce being an issue here in East Haven, it's affordable. Now, housing costs are up, rents are up 20% higher, people are staying where they are and there's just not much of a turnover at the moment.

Courtney mentioned that wealthier communities, the work force for that community struggles to live there, to afford it so they have to live elsewhere and makes for longer commutes.

Michelle Benivegna; we have three ribbon cutting ceremonies in the next few weeks, we had many during covid here in East Haven, and that she knows Biotech is looking for space. The Town is building a relationship between the town and the Chamber of Commerce to partner together. The town is applying for grants, working on bike lanes in town. The commission spoke

about ribbon cuttings and the that the town had many businesses open during covid and that they have a few coming up.

Commissioner John Tarducci said part of the town's assets are contributing to a good quality of life here in East Haven. Town asset as such, shoreline community, so you have both beach living or country style living in one town the way that East Haven is shaped. East Haven also has attractively priced properties.

Courtney addressed the public in the room, public comment was made by Amy Derbacher. Amy Derbacher, (57 Foote Road) of East Haven, mentioned that Transylvania Restaurant and Bar mentioned that they have felt such an amazing warm feeling from so many people in our community. That they would like to look into moving to East Haven. Amy mentioned that they had many positive things to say about East Haven and the community welcoming them. Amy also mentioned that her boss did the CNA program at East Haven High School, toughing on what the commission was discussing earlier about programs available at our high school.

Courtney touched on density in communities during her presentation. Commissioner John Tarducci; the town's dealing with density issues with planning and zoning. We would like to control what we can with land use regulations. All of CT needs housing, but it's difficult for people to find their desired homes.

Also, Courtney discussed the "Economic Team" for the town.

*Please see attached presentation for more details.*

#### 8. Adjournment

Commissioner John Tarducci made a motion to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Steve DeLucia, none opposed, no abstentions, all in favor, motion carries.  
Meeting adjourns at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Tina Hedley,*  
Clerk