

Town of East Haven, CT
Economic Development Commission Special Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2021
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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Shumitz
Commissioner Chugani
Commissioner Tarducci
Commissioner Maiorano

STAFF PRESENT:

Ray Baldwin, Director

PUBLIC PRESENT

Chris Perdo
Anne Benowitz-GNHCOG

Chairman Shumitz called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Members in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance and held a moment of silence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Maiorano made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the September 16th meeting. Commissioner Tarducci seconded. All were in favor; none were opposed, and none abstained. **MOTION CARRIED**

CORRESPONDENCE

None

PRESENTATION BY ANNE BENOWITZ OF THE GREATER NEW HAVEN CHAMBER ON AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A presentation was made to members of the commission by Anne Benowitz regarding growing and continuing the connection and commitment to economic development here in the Town of East Haven. She thanked the commission for having her at the meeting so that she can discuss what she does and how she helps with business retention and expansion in the surrounding towns and how she would like to help the commission and the Town do just that. She explained that to date, she has helped businesses connect with resources for 175 companies over the last 2 years and she has opened fifteen new projects since. She has the ability to connect to each town economic development commission to see what inventory they have in towns and what properties are available. She collects the data to understand the trends and what those trends are telling us as communities. She explained how the workforce development has been a challenge, but she has been only speaking to the CEO's and no one else because they are the ones who really know what's going on.

She went on to state that opportunity here in East Haven is expansive, especially with the airport expansion. She felt it was a win/win situation as a project, and an opportunity for businesses here to flourish even more. Commissioner Chugani asked Ms. Benowitz about the legalization of marijuana and the distribution of it and how in a city like East Haven, would it be attractive enough for people to benefit. She stated that she was at an ED luncheon, and it was brought up there about how the business of cannabis is a large one with different components to the sales, manufacturing, packaging, and licensing of cannabis. She thought that the towns would decide if they wanted any business of that. Commissioner Tarducci spoke about that topic as well and apparently it is determined by the census tract and the Town Council will be doing some deep dives to see what other towns are doing but as of right now there is going to be a Public Hearing through the Planning and Zoning and Town Council to see what the public is feeling about that and probably have a six-month moratorium which will go into next year. That will also be discussed at the November P&Z Meeting.

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Ms. Benowitz also discussed her excitement with the proposed changes at the high school and Director Baldwin stated that if she wants her people to see the high school to let him know. She said that she could see bigger companies coming in and offering internships, apprenticeships and other opportunities for students not going to college.

UPDATE FROM COMMISSONER TARDUCCI ON EAST HAEN ZONING PROJECTS

Commissioner Tarducci filled in the commission on different projects within the town that the Planning and Zoning Commission has been working on. He stated that it all starts from the top to all the boards and commissions, council members, employees and the public of the town and he is incredibly pleased to say that Joseph Boudreau put in a lot of work. There have been more than two dozen opportunities for the Town that have moved forward and a number of them are going through submission. A report will be attached to these minutes.

Director Baldwin then stated that the culture in Town sets the tone for the Town, their partners and how their success is our success. There are many people working hard. The 4th and 5th phase of the West End Revitalization has started, the Town Green came out wonderful and that image is the first step. Chairman Shumitz stated that East Haven used to be a drive thru community and now it is becoming a home community and said the Town is going in a good direction and he hopes it keeps up.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

There being no further business to come before the commission, **MOTION** made by Commissioner Tarducci and seconded by Commissioner Maiorano to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. All were in favor; none were opposed, and none abstained. **MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda S. LaLuna

Clerk