

Harwinton Economic Development Commission

September 4, 2013 Meeting Minutes

1. Meeting Called to Order at 6:34 p.m. Commissioners present: Chair Kerrie Ouellette, Vice-Chair Thomas Schoenemann, Secretary John DiCarlo, Frank Hickey, Jon Sederquist and Steve Criss.

2. On a motion made by Ms Ouelette and seconded by Mr. DiCarlo, the commission unanimously voted to approve adopt of an agenda amended by the correct date of the last minutes for review (05/01/13)

3. On a motion made by Mr. DiCarlo and seconded by Mr. Hickey, the commission unanimously voted to approve Minutes of the commission's 05/01/13 Special Meeting.

4. Commissioners had a dialog with First Selectman Michael Criss on the Commission's progress to date and ideas for future initiatives. Mr. Criss said he does not expect the commission to foster major commercial development due to Harwinton's rural character and desire of residents. His suggestions included: Working with landlords and realtors to fill empty commercial building space in town, including listing sites on the EDC webpage; contacting other municipalities as part of considering incentives for relocating to town; consider ways the town could help attract 55 and older housing developments similar to the Wintergreen facility.

Commissioners shared their thoughts. Ms. Ouelette said she's willing to continue serving on the commission but that reaching a quorum has been an issue that must be addressed. Mr. DiCarlo noted that online survey responses have been minimal and the commission's minimal budget makes direct mailing outreach impossible to more effectively gauge consensus among the town's business community on how the town could improve its business climate. Mr. Criss said if the commission presented a viable proposal for additional direct mail outreach, he would be willing to present it to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Steve Criss suggested that the commission could hold an open house at a vacant commercial space to meet with local business owners and showcase the location. Commissioners also discussed how to work with the town's land use committees to update regulations to help existing businesses thrive and attract appropriate business to Harwinton.

Ms Ouelette volunteered to provide commissioners a copy of existing planning and zoning regulations for review and to consider possible revisions.

Mr. DiCarlo volunteered to create a list of all commercial properties available in town through an online search and which realtors are listing them.

Mr. Schoenemann volunteered to take that list and find who the corresponding property owners are to later contact.

Ms. Ouelette said she would contact Commissioner Franci Tartaglino to see if she is willing to research incentives for attracting new business and encouraging expansion of existing companies offered in rural towns.

Mr. Steve Criss volunteered to begin drafting a fact sheet for the EDC webpage on why businesses should consider locating in Harwinton.

5. New Business: Commissioners discussed responses to forms sent with recent tax bills to add a business to the town business directory. Mr. Schoenemann reported that 21 responses were received, with 11 of them new listings. He said the recent Northwest Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report contains useful data for local businesses and commissioners agreed to have it posted on the EDC webpage.

6. Public Participation. There were no members of the public present.

7. On a motion made by Mr. Hickey and seconded by Ms. Ouelette, the commission unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. *Respectfully submitted by John DiCarlo, secretary.*

RECEIVED FOR RECORD AT HARWINTON CT
ON 9-9-13 AT 8:30AM
ATTEST NANCY E. ELDRIDGE TOWN CLERK