

**Economic Development Commission
Minutes
October 6, 2008**

Members Present: Richard Nunn, Chairman
Joseph Mirra, Vice-Chairman
Ellen Mandes
Rosemarie Preneta
Jim Wolfe

Members Absent: Tom Collette
Gary Fappiano

Others Present: Doreen DeSarro, Business Recruiter

Chairman Dick Nunn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He began by announcing that this is Ellen Mandes' last EDC meeting. The Commissioners said that Ellen will be greatly missed and wished her well in her retirement.

1. **Approval of Minutes dated September 8, 2008** – Jim Wolfe made a motion to approve the September minutes as drafted; Joe Mirra seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion to approve the minutes carried.
2. **Review of Expenditure Report** - Nothing to report. Jim Wolfe asked about the amount of money in the promotional line; Doreen DeSarro explained what items were included in this line item and said some aspects will be discussed later in the agenda.
3. **Marketing/Staff Report – September** – Doreen DeSarro distributed and reviewed the report for September. She mentioned that the Personal Property Tax Exemption for Polylok has been signed. Dick Nunn said he attended the dedication of the power plant; the new plant will save Wallingford over \$1 million per year. This savings could become a valuable marketing tool.
4. **Subcommittee Reports**
 - **P&Z Liasion** – Jim Wolfe wondered if members had seen the article in the Sunday paper about the downtown zoning district. Members briefly discussed this article. Jim also said that the future of the I-5 zone needs to be discussed
 - **Retention/Incentives** – Doreen DeSarro said this subcommittee met on September 24 to work on the list of new businesses moving into or expanding in Wallingford. As a result, letters will be sent to some of these businesses.

The subcommittee is also starting to look at the incentive programs. Since the State is phasing out the taxing of machinery and equipment in three years, will it make sense to keep the Personal Property Tax Incentive? The subcommittee has discussed lowering the threshold for the Real Property Tax Incentive Program, something which is allowed under current Sate statute. Another possibility is to add other categories to those eligible for incentives—such as information technology and communications. Jim Wolffe asked if there were any other uses which might be included in an incentive program under current statute? Doreen said that there were others

(transient residential, multi-level parking garages, retail) but some of these might not make sense for Wallingford. Doreen will continue to talk with other towns, such as Meriden, who have already considered granting incentives to other uses. The EDC needs to decide whether it wants to continue keeping the emphasis on manufacturers. The Commissioners said that manufacturing should still be a priority but that other areas should be considered as well.

Doreen said the subcommittee also discussed the 10% Electric Discount Program. She wondered if that amount was really of benefit or should this program now be tied into energy conservation (lighting, programmable thermostats, etc.) and the WCI façade improvement program. One drawback is that many of the businesses are tenants and it might be difficult to do some energy improvements as a tenant instead of an owner. Ellen Mandes said that, to a small business, the 10% is a really good deal and wouldn't like to see that abandoned. Dick Nunn mentioned that energy audits are available through the Electric Division.

- **Marketing** – Doreen DeSarro said the subcommittee is looking at tying real estate into marketing by mentioning in the ad not only the electric rates but adding a line about available real estate. Joe Mirra said we should also mention the reliable and consistent power service Wallingford enjoys. Dick Nunn agreed and said we have minimal outages in Wallingford—that's very important to many manufacturers.

Doreen said the subcommittee is also discussing whether or not to continue with national advertising. Joe Mirra said that the new company in Connecticut from Brazil has an interesting website; he thought Doreen should check it out. Perhaps the subcommittee should consider doing an e-mail to the top manufacturers in Brazil (and other countries). This idea was discussed; Doreen will look at how feasible this would be.

Jim Wolfe suggested removing the picture of the Yankee Silversmith off the website; the secretary explained that changes like that will be made to the website as part of the changeover to new editing software.

5. **Update on Downtown** – Doreen DeSarro said that Celebrate Wallingford was successful; no completed applications have yet been turned in for the Façade Improvement Program; and no new companies have moved into the Downtown since last month.

6. **Regional Matters**

- **Regional Growth Partnership** – Joe Mirra mentioned that he heard RGP has, again, begun a search for a new Executive Director.
- **Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce** – Upcoming events were highlighted.
- **Workforce Alliance** – Joe Mirra distributed the “*State of the Workforce 2008*” and asked members to read this publication; it contains a lot of good information.
Joe also mentioned that a new One Stop has opened in Meriden; the office provides help with resumes, counseling, etc.

There being no further business, Ellen Mandes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.; Jim Wolfe seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Wolff