

**Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2015**

Members Present:

- Joe Mirra, Chairman**
- Dick Nunn, Vice-Chair**
- Tom Collette**
- Gary Fappiano**
- Mark Gingras**
- Rosemarie Preneta**
- Jim Wolfe**

Others Present:

- Don Roe, Ec. Dev. Coordinator**
- Tim Ryan, Ec. Dev. Specialist**
- Lynn Wolff, Secretary**
- Albert Ruggiero, Paradise Hills Vineyard & Winery**
- Brenda Ruggiero, Paradise Hills Vineyard & Winery**
- Natalie Willis, Paradise Hills Vineyard & Winery**
- Atty. Dan Mara**
- Joe Gouveia, Gouveia Vineyards**
- John LeTourneau, Wlfd. Town Council**

Chairman Joe Mirra called the regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Discussion and Possible Action on Regular Meeting Minutes dated June 1, 2015 – Mark Gingras made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Dick Nunn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

2. Discussion with Paradise Hills Winery – Don Roe stated that Paradise Hills Winery came to the EDC to discuss their business. Don asked Mr. Ruggiero to introduce the others in his party.

Tom Collette arrived at 6:31 p.m.

Mr. Ruggiero said they had asked to come before the EDC for two reasons:

- 1) In their opinion, Wallingford is missing out on a great tourism opportunity with its two wineries, which are now year-round destinations.

Gary Fappiano arrived at 6:33 p.m.

- 2) Paradise Hills would like the EDC’s support when it goes before the PZC with some zoning changes that will allow them to have the same type of events as permitted at other wineries in the State.

44 Joe Mirra asked what changes the winery plans to request. Attorney Dan Mara answered that
45 the winery would like cater or sell food (currently, 20 people can show up and have pizza
46 delivered and that's OK but the winery can't provide any food); have live acoustic music (guitar or
47 piano) 2-3 times/week; organize a party/event (birthday, Mother's Day, fundraisers, farm-to-table
48 dinners); and increase agro tourism, which will, in turn, increase business to other Town
49 businesses as well.

50 Jim Wolfe was surprised that the winery could not sell cheese and crackers. Atty. Mara said
51 that under State regulations, the winery could but Wallingford doesn't currently allow it.

52 Joe Gouveia said that his winery approached the Town about selling cheese but was also told
53 it was not allowed. Also, the winery purchased a tent to put up for four hours on Saturdays and
54 Sundays from July 1 through October. He received letters from Planning & Zoning and the
55 Health Department saying he couldn't have the tent without increasing the number of parking
56 spaces. Mr. Gouveia also wanted to expand and add a deck but was told by the Fire Marshall
57 that he would need a sprinkler system, which would mean changes to his water supply, the septic
58 system and the parking area. Mr. Gouveia thinks the regulations in this Town make it very difficult
59 to run a business.

60 Joe Mirra asked Paradise Hills to explain the issue of selling food. Atty. Mara said that they
61 would, ultimately, like to serve either cold, pre-packaged food or have caterers bring food in for
62 events.

63 Jim Wolfe asked if Paradise Hills plans to do weddings. Atty. Mara said they do not. They
64 want to serve food at events. Paradise Hills hopes to change the definition of farm wineries.

65 Regarding music at events, the winery has already talked about the noise ordinance with
66 Planning & Zoning and proposed that, if the winery were allowed to have music, they would abide
67 by the rules in the current ordinance. Planning & Zoning said they can't enforce the ordinance so
68 they won't allow any music right now.

69 Jim Wolfe asked if there is a "season" for the proposed events. Atty. Mara said the outdoor
70 season goes from May 1 through the October Columbus Day weekend but the winery is open
71 year-round.

72 Regarding the issue of food, Joe Mirra asked if they've considered food trucks. Mr. Gouveia
73 said he asked the Health Department about that possibility but they didn't think it would be
74 allowed.

75 Mark Gingras said he would like to review the specifics of what Paradise Hills will request be
76 changed by the PZC before he can make a decision, including the types of events, etc.

77 Tom Collette said the Rotary Club has held a catered event at Gouveia's in the past; Mr.
78 Gouveia said they have held a few events and fundraisers. He said that about \$11 million has
79 been raised in various fundraisers.

80 Joe Mirra asked that the EDC receive a copy of whatever Paradise Hills submits to the Town;
81 Atty. Mara said he will make sure the EDC is copied. Atty. Mara distributed a few copies of the
82 proposed language for the Commissioners to review.

83 Brenda Ruggiero said many of the articles in the paper have been wrong: Paradise Hills
84 Winery never received a Cease & Desist order and most of their neighbors love them. She said
85 she loves Wallingford and is just waiting for Wallingford to love us (Paradise Hills Winery). They
86 never charge for the events they've had, never charge for the music; and never had one
87 complaint filed against them. Currently, they can only have a certain number of events within a
88 certain amount of time.

89 Joe Mirra asked if the wineries know how many people they bring to the Town? Joe Gouveia
90 said he owns about 100 acres and estimates he brings in 30,000 people. Mr. Ruggiero said his
91 winery is smaller than Gouveia's, about 65 acres, and brings in less. Joe said that you should
92 educate the PZC on how much business your wineries bring in.

93 Tom Collette asked what CT winery would each of the Wallingford wineries most like to be like,
94 in terms of events, etc.? Atty. Mara answered by saying that Wallingford is the most restrictive
95 town out of all the other towns with wineries.

96 Don Roe asked who will be the contact regarding further questions? Al Ruggiero said to
97 contact him.

98 Jim Wolfe asked if Paradise Hills wants an ancillary store (less than 10% or 150 sf building)?
99 Atty. Mara said their building is 2,500 sf and one-half is processing.

100 Mr. Gouveia said he has cut his hours to help keep the neighbors happy. He estimates he has
101 80 FT workers between the winery and The Library Wine Bar and Grill.

102 With no further questions or comments, the winery group thanked the EDC for their time and left at
103 7:32 p.m.

104

105 3. **Review of Monthly Expenditure Report** – Jim Wolfe asked about the \$82.50 expenditure in the
106 July report (PS – Economic Development Marketing line item); staff answered that it was for design
107 work on the highway sign. There were no further questions on either the July or August report.

108

109 4. **Committee Reports**

110 • **Marketing** – Tom Collette gave a brief review of what the committee had discussed at its last
111 meeting.

112 ➤ CERC marketing initiative update – a copy of the final report was distributed for the
113 EDC's review. Tim Ryan said this report was issued after the EDC requested CERC
114 review the EDC's marketing program to see if the Town is on the right track. Some

115 recommendations include: knowing why businesses are coming to Wallingford and to be
116 active in networking.

117 Jim Wolfe asked if we paid for this report; Tim said yes. Jim then asked why property
118 owners have to pay CERC to put a listing on the SiteFinder section of our web site? Don
119 Roe said the Town can post a few listings each month as part of its membership. Initially,
120 when we first linked to CERC, the EDC tried posting more but the local brokers objected,
121 saying it was taking business away from them. Tim said he strongly recommends
122 keeping the workings of the SiteFinder as is. Jim said he didn't realize it was a CERC
123 product, since it looks like our web site. Don said the link was purposefully designed to
124 look exactly like our site. Currently, a property owner can pay CERC to put a listing on or
125 go through a broker.

126 Tim said another recommendation in the CERC report is to develop a 30 second
127 commercial; this still needs to be worked on.

128 Tom said updating our prospectus and discussing a hiring a videographer are items
129 that the committee stills needs to work on. He reminded the EDC about the Hilton
130 Gardens Inn grand opening on September 17 (see Dates to Remember).

- 131 ➤ Signage – The new sign on I-91 North is done; the committee is pleased with the results.
132 Landscaping needs to be addressed at both signs to increase visibility.
- 133 ➤ Next meeting – October 28 at 10:45 a.m.

134

135 ● **P&Z Liaison –**

- 136 ➤ Review and approve letter of support for G.B. Management, 319 No. Colony – Don Roe
137 explained that a Wallingford company wants to double their space and staff by renovating
138 a small building behind their current location on North Colony Road. G.B. Management
139 will be going before ZBA requesting two variances for the project: one for the setback
140 requirement and one for parking (they would be 3 spaces short). Don distributed a draft
141 letter of support for Commission review. **Jim Wolfe made a motion to support the**
142 **request as stated in the draft letter; Dick Nunn seconded the motion. The motion**
143 **passed unanimously.** It was decided that Joe Mirra will attend the ZBA meeting on
144 September 21 and Jim Wolfe will attend the POCD meeting scheduled for that same
145 evening.
- 146 ➤ Update on: Plan of Conservation & Development – Jim Wolfe has attended several
147 meetings; right now the group is just gathering information. Some of the items discussed
148 include: I-5/IX; changing some of the zoning regulations; extending the YLB (which Jim
149 does not think will go forward); energy/our Town's resources (where we can grow); land
150 usage in Barnes (all agree that 25% coverage is too restrictive but no consensus on a

151 better % at this time); and an east/west road to connect to Parker Farms. Jim says he is
152 not very optimistic that this POCD will be any different from the last – he doesn't see any
153 big projects getting done, despite the recommendations. Mark Gingras asked if parking
154 was discussed; Jim said this will be discussed at the next meeting. Don Roe agreed and
155 said parking and other downtown regulations will be discussed next. Don also said a
156 group representing the POCD will be at Celebrate Wallingford asking residents about
157 downtown.

- 158 ➤ Discussion re: downtown – Nothing additional besides the discussion under POCD
- 159 ➤ Update on Watershed Protection Regulation – Don Roe thinks this will be discussed at a
160 PZC workshop to be held on September 28.
- 161 ➤ Next meeting – No meeting date was set.

162

163 • **Retention/Incentives** –

- 164 ➤ Company visits – Gary Fappiano said a visit with Amphenol has been scheduled for
165 October 7 at 10 a.m. Joe Mirra will attend; if Joe cannot, Jim Wolfe volunteered to go.
166 Tim Ryan mentioned that Amphenol is on the 2015 Marcum Tech Top 40 – a list of
167 fastest growing tech companies.
 - 168 ➤ Follow-up re: IHZ incentive(s) – Gary Fappiano said the committee hopes this incentive
169 will be in place by early next year.
 - 170 ➤ Follow-up re: Bristol-Myers Squibb – Gary Fappiano said the committee hasn't yet
171 discussed this item.
- 172 Gary Fappiano told the EDC that this past summer was busier than most; the committee has
173 met with several companies, most of which want to know what incentives the Town can offer.
- 174 ➤ Next meeting – No meeting date was set.

175

176 5. **CERC Municipal Training Workshop** –The Marketing Committee plans to attend this training
177 workshop in Hamden on November 10.

178

179 Gary Fappiano asked if anything has happened with Mr. DiNatale's project on Center Street; Tim
180 Ryan said Mr. DiNatale has reluctantly decided to delay submitting his project to the PZC.

181

182 6. **Chairman's report** – Joe Mirra reminded the EDC about a previous discussion regarding additional
183 people being part of the EDC; he wanted to know what the EDC thought about it. Jim Wolfe asked if
184 the secretary could prepare a tally showing how many times over the last year commissioners from
185 one of the committees were both absent at the same EDC meeting; the secretary agreed to look at
186 past minutes and create a tally. Jim said he felt that having one alternate for each committee would

187 be helpful. Don Roe reminded the EDC that there are three options if it chooses to get additional
188 people involved: 1) Request an ordinance change to add two more members; 2) Request an
189 ordinance change to add alternates; or 3) Create volunteer positions. Joe said he would like to
190 make a decision and, if needed, go to the Town Council with the request by early next year. Gary
191 Fappiano suggested looking for candidates through SCOW, for example. The Commissioners
192 agreed that the EDC is not as demographically diverse as it could be and agreed that this needs to
193 be discussed further.

194

195 7. **Staff reports/regional matters** – Tim Ryan first shared some good news: 1) Amazon is coming to
196 Town (29 Research Parkway). Joe Mirra suggested we invite them the State of the Town, which Tim
197 will do if they are in place by that time; 2) Acuity Brands is considering Wallingford for their North
198 American Engineering Center; they've narrowed their search down to two facilities but are also
199 looking at New Haven; 3) Edible Arrangements is looking to expand their location on Barnes Road;
200 4) Bristol-Myers Squibb has been very communicative about their plans. Although the
201 research/discovery component of the facility will relocate, BMS is open to keeping the non-discovery
202 component (about 500 jobs) in Wallingford. BMS no longer wants to own its current building and will
203 probably list it next week. BMS could lease back space in that same building from a new owner or
204 move the employees to another leased space. Meetings with BMS will continue to take place as the
205 Town wants to remain pro-active; and 6) Niagara Bottled Water has restarted communications
206 regarding finding space for its bottling facility in Connecticut. One Wallingford site may be
207 considered.

208 Tim distributed reports for June, July and August for the EDC to review (*copies attached*).

209 Don Roe said he attended a TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) meeting. The new TIF program is
210 considerably easier to deal with, although the Town would have to create TIF districts. *Don will send*
211 *the link to the CT Main Street webpage so members can read about this program.* Jim Wolfe asked
212 if TIF can be married with the IHZ; Don said that wasn't answered at the meeting but he has emailed
213 them to ask that question.

214 EDC staff is looking at GIS and its efficacy for economic development. Tim Ryan is to talk to
215 brokers and nail down what data/reports they look for on-line. Don and Lynn Wolff looked at other
216 towns and regional economic development entities, both in- and out-of-state. Staff has initially found
217 that most towns' sites only provide the assessor's field card; Don thinks most brokers would want to
218 be able to access more than a field card.

219 An article on CT's report card on manufacturing was distributed for the EDC to read at a later
220 date.

221 Don said he had a meeting with M&M Redemption Center who says the amount of money they
222 get receive for plastics and cans does not cover their business costs. This amount was set back at

223 the very introduction of the bottle bill. They plan to ask the legislature to change the bill and want the
224 Town's support. *In order to research this issue, staff plans to talk to local grocery stores and*
225 *distributors.* Mark Gingras offered more on the history and the experience of the distributors in
226 dealing with this law.

227
228 **8. Dates to Remember** – Joe Mirra said that in addition to those listed on the agenda, a Business
229 Before Hours will be held on September 16 at 7:30-9:00 a.m. at HUBCAP.

230
231 **9. Community Involvement** – No report.

232
233 **There being no further business, Jim Wolfe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50**
234 **p.m.; Mark Gingras seconded the motion. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.**

235
236 Sincerely,
237
238
239 Lynn M. Wolff, Secretary
240

241 Attachments
242
243 EDCRMMin91415DrNotApp