

**Town of Trumbull**  
**Economic and Community Development Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**November 9, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Trumbull Town Hall – Long Hill Conference Room**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission of the Town of Trumbull was held at Trumbull Town Hall on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**Attendance**

**Members Present:**     Ralph Sather (Chairman)  
                                  Beryl Kaufman (Vice Chairman)  
                                  Marshall Marcus  
                                  Shelby LeVino  
                                  Karen DelVecchio  
                                  Ted Chase

**Members Absent:**     Evelyn Zamary  
                                  Eric Michel

**Also Present:**         Rina Bakalar – Director of Economic & Community Development  
                                  Gia Mentillo – Economic & Community Development Clerk  
                                  Trumbull Community Television

Chairman Sather called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of October 5, 2021 Minutes**

Commissioner LeVino requested he be removed from the list of “present members” for the October 5, 2021 meeting as he left early, and Chairman Sather pointed out typos to be revised.

A motion to approve the October 5, 2021 minutes was made by Commissioner DelVecchio and seconded by Commissioner Marcus. The motion carried unanimously.

**Chairman’s Report**

Chairman Sather shared positive feedback he received regarding the Annual Business Appreciation Breakfast and thanked staff and Commissioners for their efforts in organizing the event. Commissioner Marcus proposed creating a separate event for the awards ceremony in the future as he received positive feedback about it having been removed from this year’s breakfast. Commissioner DelVecchio suggested an awards event could be done with the Trumbull Chamber in the future potentially.

Chairman Sather reminded commission members to utilize “reply” rather than “reply all” when responding to his emails and to avoid sending emails to the entire Commission. Commissioner Chase asked how to best share information with the Commission when needed, and Director Bakalar informed that such information could be sent to staff members who would then disperse it as needed.

Chairman Sather stated that he has received inquiries as to why the ECDC currently has 8 sitting members rather than the allotted 9 members. While it is up to the First Selectman to appoint new commissioners, the chairman requested that commissioners actively encourage interested parties to send in their resumes for consideration.

#### Support for Projects of Interest to the Town:

The Chairman requested that the Commission resume their practice of regularly setting clear goals for themselves to better support the town and its residents. While the Commission voiced support for this, Vice Chairman Kaufman requested that a few examples of goals from past years be put together for next month’s meeting in hopes of guiding the discussion.

#### Small Business Improvement Team(s):

Chairman Sather proposed that the Commission work toward developing “small business swat teams.” He stated that these teams would be comprised of 2-3 commissioners who have been identified as having expertise uniquely suited to assisting specific organizations. The Commission voiced general support for this idea, but Commissioner Marcus cautioned members that offering this service through the Commission could create a liability for the town. Director Bakalar emphasized the importance of having clear direction, staying responsive, and fully following through with plans if engaging such a service.

### **Director’s Report**

#### Business Update:

Director Rina Bakalar stated that the Long Hill Market Grand Opening / Ribbon Cutting event went well, noting that a separate event will be conducted for Ecco Restaurant. She further stated that, though not yet ready for business, the restaurant was able to attain approval for their liquor location permit through Trumbull Planning and Zoning Commission on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup> and is hoping to open after Thanksgiving.

Ms. Bakalar informed that there has been an uptick in development interests in Trumbull over the past 1-2 months, largely in business-commercial (BC) zones. She noted that the new-business filings for the past four years have been on average approximately 50 businesses per year more as compared to the previous 10 years. Ms. Bakalar noted that many communities use this number of for their annual new business number. She noted she does not. She focuses on reporting brick and mortar business location.

The Director shared her intent to establish several other ribbon cutting events throughout town over the next few months, noting a need to gauge the feasibility of conducting indoor events.

### Planning Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that there will be another public input meeting for Trumbull Center. Rob Librandi is looking December 2<sup>nd</sup> for a possible meeting. The information will be shared once confirmed. Ms. Bakalar encouraged all Commission members to share their thoughts on Trumbull Center into the process if they have not done so already.

The Director informed that the town is still working on the process to receive the \$200,000 of funding from the state for the planning study at the Westfield Trumbull Mall, noting that the town cannot put a contract out for bid in search of a consulting team until the money is in-hand.

### Grant Update:

The Director stated that the town is pursuing a grant opportunity through CT. Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) known as the CT. Communities Challenge Grant Program.

Ms. Bakalar stated that funding to add a trail head to the commuter parking lot next to Christian Heritage Church and a trail connector to Twin Brooks will be awarded shortly.

### Event Update:

The Director stated that she is working to organize a hiring resource event for the winter to effectively address business employment needs. She also shared her intent to establish a Home Based Business event for the spring.

Ms. Bakalar noted the launch of the fundraising campaign for the new Veterans and First Responder Center, noting the garnering of approximately \$23,000 in support of the center thus far. She shared that there has been a website ([www.trumbullvfr.org](http://www.trumbullvfr.org)) established for online donations, but people may opt to mail their donations to a specified PO Box. Commissioner Marcus stated the importance of emphasizing naming opportunities when advertising this fundraising event (i.e. naming of rooms or customizing plaques for the dedication wall).

### Community Development Update:

The Director shared that she recently met with a representative from Sustainable Trumbull in an effort to expand Trumbull's electric car charging infrastructure by identifying potential charging locations, adding that communications are underway to bring the vision to fruition. She thanked Gia Mentillo for her assistance preparing the GIS maps for the effort.

Ms. Bakalar stated that she is working to re-instate regular issuance of the Branded Newsletter now that COVID-19 communications have subsided.

Commissioner Marcus shared concerns about recent changes to the lunch program at the Trumbull Senior Center, noting that the cost of meals has significantly increased. He recommended that residents who qualify for the Local Meals Program should be able to utilize their food allotment at the center. Ms. Bakalar stated that the food would have to come from local restaurants but she would check with Michele Jakab to see if there is a doable connection.

Commissioner Marcus proposed identifying empty spaces in town as potential shared Kitchen locations for the cottage food industries and numerous food trucks in town, noting that he works with a similar project out of New York which has proved beneficial. Ms. Bakalar shared support for the concept, but she noted that it would be difficult to find someone to underwrite the cost of the space.

### **Opportunity for Community Input**

No public comment.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:37p.m. by Commissioner Marcus and seconded by Vice Chairman Kaufman. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo

Land Use / Economic & Community Development Administrative Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi  
Doug Wenz