



# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021, 7:00 PM  
ZOOM MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Donna Resutek, Regular Members Chris Todd, David Hurley and Alternates Susan Conte and Amos Smith

**ABSENT:** Regular Member Khara Dodds and Alternate Bryan Platt

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Christine Post, Recording Clerk

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Sean Kelly called the Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS** (on non-agenda items): **NONE**

**III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

**1. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce**

Ms. Houlihan reported that the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce is working with the Connecticut Business Industry Association to organize their annual Q&A with legislatures via Zoom on either February 14<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> at 9 am. There is no pre-registering or fee required.

**2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives**

Ms. Houlihan updated the commission that the farm winery, brewery, cidery and distillery amended regulation which was advanced to the Planning and Zoning Commission was approved effective December 1, 2020. On Monday, January 11, 2021 at the Town Meeting the farmland preservation proposal for approximately 165 acres for Oakridge Dairy was approved so the town will become a funding partner with the Department of Agriculture and Connecticut Farmland Trust.

**3. Report: Connecticut Economic Development Association Best Practices**

**a. Copy of Shop Ellington 2020 Event Survey**

Chairman Kelly gave an overview of the Shop Ellington 2020 event for the new commission members. Ms. Houlihan presented the event survey responses to the

commission from the 13 businesses that responded to the survey of the 30 businesses which participated in the event.

Discussion ensued that the annual Earth Day event will most likely be cancelled this year due to COVID-19.

Commissioner Conte indicated she found the event to be very successful and she kept the signage up which drew in business all month long. She further suggested notifying the public of the next event at the farmer's market.

Chairman Kelly suggested keeping this item on the agenda to start planning ahead for a potential fall 2021 event.

4. Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs

- a. Discuss possible amendment to the Tax Abatement Program to establish an abatement implementation schedule.

Chairman Kelly reported that on Monday, January 11, 2021, the Earthlight abatement was passed in the Town Meeting.

The commission discussed updating the abatement schedule by reviewing what other surrounding towns' policies are to create a more rigid schedule of what type of applications fit into which solid abatement categories and laying out a formula of some type to eliminate calculating the abatement in front of the petitioner. Ms. Houlihan presented both Windsor and Vernon's abatement policies for review and comparison. The commissioners agreed that Vernon's policy was more in line with Ellington's needs. Commissioner Hurley stated that the Economic Development Commission should have the discretion to consider the overall economic impact the project will have on the community in terms of new employment opportunities.

During the course of discussion, the commissioners agreed on a rough draft outline for the amended abatement schedule to provide additional guidance around the implementation schedule as follows:

- To keep the current structure of 3 tiers, along with Ellington's current additional abatements for farms.
- Tier A should mirror the Earthlight abatement schedule less 5%.
- Chairman Kelly questioned the amount of the Tier B level assessment. Ms. Houlihan stated it should mirror the state statute. She then pulled up the state statute for the Commission to review.
- Tier B for the \$500,000.00 to \$3,000,000.00 million investment should have a range of 70% to 25% for a 5 year period.
- Tier C should be kept as is to continue to encourage small business growth in Ellington.

- The commissioners discussed aspects of the Windsor abatement schedule and decided to treat existing businesses slightly different so that at the lower end of the spectrum the schedule would tolerate a smaller range and slightly higher potential tax abatement to keep current companies growing within Ellington. It was decided that utilizing a maximum average provides the commission with flexibility. Further, additional percentages can be increased based upon a list of criteria assigning value, such as new jobs created and equipment added to the tax roll. Therefore, adding a separate secondary clause that the commission at its discretion can allot a 5% increase above the abatement schedule for existing businesses was agreed upon as a way to incentivize existing business growth.

Ms. Houlihan will obtain the information from prior abatements granted by the commission and will draft a proposed amendment based upon the commissioners' discussion for review at the next meeting based.

#### 5. Report: Current Economic Activity

There is no new information regarding an anticipated opening date for DiFiore's Ravioli Shop.

Chairman Kelly asked if anyone had any information on the engineering school for kids located near the urgent care and Commissioner Todd responded that it is a stem enrichment program, offering after school vacation and summer programs.

The commission discussed the new construction for The BarnYard's bridge, Earthlight's upcoming headquarters and the Oakridge Dairy methane digester.

### IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the November 18, 2020 regular meeting minutes and December 16, 2020 special meeting minutes.

**MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (RESUTEK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 18, 2020 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

**MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (RESUTEK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 16, 2020 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

#### 2. Correspondence:

- a. Letter from Pullman & Comley dated December 14, 2020 – CTEC Solar, LLC petition for Declaratory Ruling for a solar project to be located at 277 Sadds Mill Road, Ellington, CT.

The commission discussed the proposed 30-acre solar farm which will include bee keeping. Commissioner Hurley mentioned an article in the Hartford Courant that stated solar developments have been incorporating goat farms, bee keeping and vegetable farming, to accommodate agricultural goals with solar projects.

b. Election of Officers for 2021

**Chairman Position**

**MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER KELLY FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2021.**

**HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

**COMMISSIONER KELLY ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.**

**MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER KELLY FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2021.**

**Vice-Chairman Position**

**MOVED (TODD) SECONDED (KELLY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER RESUTEK FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2021.**

**HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

**COMMISSIONER RESUTEK ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION.**

**MOVED (TODD) SECONDED (KELLY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT COMMISSIONER RESUTEK FOR VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FOR THE YEAR OF 2021.**

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (HURLEY) SECONDED (TODD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING AT 8:23 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Christine Post, Recording Clerk