



# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025, 7:00 PM**

**IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE: TOWN HALL ANNEX, 57 MAIN STREET, ELLINGTON, CT**  
**REMOTE ATTENDANCE: VIA ZOOM MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Donna Resutek, Regular Members David Hurley (via Zoom) and Cynthia Soto

**ABSENT:** Regular Member Chris Todd, Alternates Amos Smith and Michael Swanson

### **STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner and Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Sean Kelly called the Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

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

### **III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

#### **1. Report: Tax Incentive/Abatement Programs**

Nothing new to report.

#### **2. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce**

Nothing new to report.

#### **3. Agricultural Initiatives**

Dianne Trueb, Ellington Farmers Market's Market Master, attended the meeting with design plans from The BarnYard for two permanent structures on town property where the Farmers Market is now located. The structures would simply be a roof and columns with gravel flooring. With this design, farmers at the market would be covered when the weather is undesirable. Dianne requested a letter of support from the commission and noted her plan to apply for grants to cover the cost of the structures. Dianne also noted collaborating with the Parks and Recreation Department for support. Chairman Kelly asked if the structure would be for other events as well and Dianne confirmed yes it would be, except for standing Farmer's Market dates and times. Dianne also noted the importance of a long-term lease agreement for the property for the Farmers Market to move forward with the improvement plans. Vice Chairman Resutek added that an endorsement letter should highlight the benefits the structure would provide to additional town events throughout the year, i.e. Earth Day. In conclusion, the Town Planner and Economic Development Commission will craft an endorsement letter for the potential site improvements to benefit the Farmers Market and other community events.

#### 4. CEDAS

##### a. Monthly Customer Service Satisfaction Survey Results

No new results to report.

##### b. Best Practices in Economic Development and Land Use Planning 2025 Application.

Chairman Kelly opened the discussion regarding the 2025 draft application and noted, if all points were awarded, the commission would achieve Silver status. Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, joined the conversation and asked the commission to focus attention to questions answered versus unanswered and offer any feedback. Furthermore, Lisa noted any unanswered questions would prove helpful for the commission to review and establish future goals. Commissioner Hurley requested Lisa to review the questions that were not answered in the draft.

To begin, Lisa highlighted question 9 in the draft, "Community has a written brand identity and marketing strategy", and reported there are no written identity brands at this time. Next, under question 11, "Community has a plan for communicating effectively across language barriers", the Town of Ellington has not identified a need for additional resources currently. Question 14, "Works collaboratively with a diverse group of partners, reflecting the diversity of your community (race, ethnicity, gender, unique perspectives, etc.) that informs inclusive growth and equitable economic development", the commission did not provide additional comment. Lisa shared that question 16, "encourages applicants to conduct community and neighborhood meetings in advance of public hearings and provides relevant contacts or support", she explained often the nature of applications do not warrant community or neighborhood meetings. However, when a proposal does warrant pre-application outreach (e.g. large solar array projects) staff and town officials recommend applicants conduct neighborhood meetings. Lisa noted that for question 17, "Offers coordinated inspections if applicable, e.g. public safety and building inspector", the town does some joint inspections, however, it's only the sharing of the building official's inspection schedule to assist the assessor's office in conducting their inspections. Lisa brought the commissions attention to question 22, "Has completed a standardized economic development self-assessment and has a plan for continuous improvement", and shared the last assessment was conducted in 2016 through CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center), which is now AdvancedCT, noting the assessment questionnaire was revised in 2020. The assessments are very similar. Since the last assessment, the commission has completed 10 actions. Chairman Kelly agreed this section is sufficient for the 2025 application. Commissioner Hurley added the new assessment is something that should be reviewed by the commission before proceeding.

The next question, number 25, "Has an economic development strategic plan current within the past three years", the commission does not have a current strategic plan. For question 29, "Has a formal Business Retention and Expansion plan/program. Formal programs are systematic approaches to business visits. These must include some strategy beyond occasional visits", the Town does not have one at this time. Chairman Kelly commented for the size of the town and town's budget, this is not applicable. Question 30 states "Zoning codes provide reliability, predictability and transparency through tools such as form-based zoning", which Lisa reported the town does not currently have. Lastly, question 32, "Engages women and minority-owned businesses to determine specific needs and direct them to specialized resources" was discussed during the previous commission meeting. Lisa noted the addition of Shop Ellington and the Ellington Farm Day events were listed under question 33, "other innovation and creative ideas not previously accounted for in other criteria".

In conclusion, the commission agreed the application should be submitted as drafted.

5. Report: Current Economic Activity

a. Discuss business survey and establishment of local business networking meetings.

The commission and the Ellington Planning Department are happy to announce the first business networking event on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 10:00 AM at JRego's Gathering Place. Businesses are asked to RSVP by June 23<sup>rd</sup> and there is currently one respondent. Lisa shared that she would attend the meeting along with First Selectman Lori Spielman as town representatives. The format of the meeting will be casual and flexible in nature with a focus on connecting attending businesses and highlighting business needs or questions. Commissioner Soto asked where the announcement is posted and Lisa responded the invite was sent earlier that day to the email distribution list of 120 businesses, the First Selectman's Office will post it on social media, Lisa will also post it on the commission's webpage, and the flyer will be distributed around town.

Lisa shared a new business has opened in town, Mark's Appliances, located at 89 West Road.

Chairman Kelly shared the state passed a budget that includes funding for daycare providers with hopes to improve daycare challenges.

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget & Expenditures Update.

Lisa commented the current fiscal year is ending and for past fiscal year closings any remaining funds often went to signage for Town events, but the signage supply is sufficient. Vice Chairman Resutek suggested offering attendees at the upcoming networking event a promotional item from the commission for their attendance. Ideas were discussed among commissioners.

2. Approval of May 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.

**MOVED (RESUTEK) SECONDED (SOTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MAY 14, 2025, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

3. Correspondence/Discussion:

Lisa shared the Commissioner Recognition Ceremony highlights from the last Board of Selectmen meeting and Alternate Amos Smith was sent a letter thanking him for his five years of service on this commission. Additionally, Commissioner Dave Hurley was recognized for 15 years of service and will be receiving a letter in the mail also. Thank you to both commissioners for your continued efforts for the Ellington community.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (RESUTEK) SECONDED (SOTO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:45 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Ashley DuBois, Recording Clerk