



West Hartford Virtual Community Planning & Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

**This meeting was available for live viewing on the WHCi YouTube
Channel.**

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 8:00 AM

1. Call to Order

A. Call to Order – Chairman Leon Davidoff called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Present: Councilors Leon Davidoff and Ben Wenograd, Town Manager Matthew Hart, Town Planner Todd Dumais, Acting Community Development and Town Engineer Duane Martin, Economic Development Coordinator Kristen Gorski, Assistant Corporation Counsel Cynthia Lauture and Deputy Corporation Counsel Gina Varano. Mayor Cantor joined the meeting at 8:10 a.m., and Councilor Zydanowicz at 8:52 a.m.

2. Business Items

A. December 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes - Tabled

B. Community Engagement for New Park Ave. Transit-Oriented District Project – Town Manager Matthew Hart reported that a related item would be on the Town Council agenda for Tuesday, Jan. 25th extending the Moratorium. Todd Dumais, Town Planner provided the committee with an update on the draft regarding this project and continued community engagement. Final draft is expected to be presented at next month's meeting.

C. Cannabis Zoning Ordinance Discussion – Todd Dumais, Town Planner discussed the zoning related components of Public Act 21-1 that will impact the Town's zoning ordinances. (See attached report). Assistant Corporation Counsel Lauture spoke about the parallels between Cannabis consumption and the use of tobacco products. Ms. Lauture discussed the Clean Indoor Air Act and the prohibitions regarding the use of tobacco products/smoking and any Cannabis use would follow the same prohibitions. Current State law allows municipalities to regulate activities deemed harmful to public health, which includes tobacco smoking. This would allow for towns to prohibit Cannabis in the same areas as tobacco smoking is prohibited. For towns with more than 50,000 residents, the town may regulate a designated area, however if we regulate, they must designate where public consumption is allowed. If no regulation is done, areas prohibited would be those existing as it relates to the Clean Indoor Air Act. The Clean Indoor Air Act also includes allowing prohibitions in restaurants and businesses. Mr. Hart suggested that Human & Community Services might have some input on this Ordinance discussion as parks are involved, as well as outdoor dining considerations. Chairman Davidoff suggested that more members of the Town Council should be present for these discussions, possibly a committee

of the whole due to the nature of this ordinance as it relates to Public Safety, Leisure Services, Public Works, and all of these committees should have input in drafting this Ordinance. The question of timing was asked and Town Planner Todd Dumais reported that the State still needs to develop a process for licensing and along with Deputy Corporation Counsel Varano, recommends that a 30 – 60 day window would be appropriate to determine restrictions. Items for the Town Council to consider will be drafted by Corporation Counsel, and Town Planner will provide additional detail to share with the committee at the next meeting. Invitations to all councilors will be sent for the purpose of having a wider discussion with as many Town Councilors as possible.

- D. Outdoor Dining Ordinance Amendment – (See attached Memo) Town Planner Todd Dumais gave an overview of the act regarding outdoor dining in public right of way. Mr. Dumais also discussed the Special Use Permit and Seasonal Permit processes. Attorney Varano reminded the committee of the Fee Structure and parking spaces that would be involved and Town Manager Hart reported that a proposal will be included to address this. It was agreed that the changes proposed and additional discussion regarding fees would be necessary for the next committee meeting.
- E. Ordinance to Implement Recent Statutory Changes of PA 21-29 – (See attached Memo) Town Planner Todd Dumais gave an overview of the new Public Act, and the suggestions for adjusting the Ordinances we currently have in order to comply. The Committee members agreed that this Ordinance change should move forward to Town Council agenda.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

- A. Economic Development – Economic Development Coordinator Kristen Gorski provided update on activities within the department. Andrea Masisak recently joined the department as Part Time Economic Development Specialist. The department expanded their Business Data Base and will continue working on that. Ms. Gorski reported on the manufacturing initiative that is being developed. Visits were made to various manufacturing companies and additional visits are planned for the coming year. These visits help to understand the constraints and goals the manufacturers have and how the Town can provide support. Chairman Davidoff suggested a “Business Roundtable” for manufacturers to participate in that might be helpful in sharing ideas.
- B. Community Development – Acting Community Development Director and Town Engineer Duane Martin provided an overview of current projects involving meetings with the Metropolitan District Commission regarding sump pump issues and inspections. A Building Inspector position was created to full time from part time and that has helped improve inspection time frames. City View upgrade is progressing well, and spring is targeted for implementation. Regarding the North Main Street Road Diet, Mr. Martin reported that after the survey results are completed, a report would be presented including the study from the Consultant. Presentation will be given to the Town Council in May, which will include recommendations from the consultant.
- C. Town Manager – Matthew Hart noted that Rick Ledwith, Human Resources Director will be appointed as Acting Town Manager and will be attending all Committee

meetings of the Town Council. Future Committee meetings will involve the many zoning related items that are coming up. Chairman Davidoff thanked Town Manager Hart for his hard work with this Committee and wished him well in his new role at the Capitol Region Council of Governments.

5. Future Agenda Items – Items 2B, 2C and 2D for continued discussion

6. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 9:11 a.m.
