



TOWN of  
**THOMPSON**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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*Linda Paradise*  
TOWN CLERK A SST

**Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, March 21, 2018  
MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman Brian Yacino

H. Charles Obert  
Brian Santos  
John Sharpe (6:47 PM)  
Robert Larkin

Also present: Ken Beausoleil, First Selectman; Randy Blackmer, Agriculture Commission; Brian Loffredo, Branding Subcommittee; Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary

**Absent:**

Tyra Penn-Gesek  
JoAnn Hall

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call:**

Chairman Brian Yacino called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

**II. Approval of Minutes, February 28, 2018:**

**(M/S/C Obert/Larkin)** Note was made that item VIII, a: It was Brian Yacino who thanked Diane Minarik, welcomed D. Durst. Motion with that modification carried unanimously.

**III. Reports:**

1. Treasure: J. Hall being absent, no report.

2. Update on Businesses in Town:

\*R. Larkin: the mini-golf course work is nicely underway

\* B. Santos: the steakhouse (The Leopard) under construction on RT 193 near the Airline Trail should be completed soon.

\* K. Beausoleil: the fluid situation with the ExtraMart building seem to be changing

\* B. Yacino tried Max Catering, 773 Quinebaug Av, confirming that they offer more than just catering. They now offer eat-in or take-out and are open to the public later in the week and for brunch.

\* K. Beausoleil: let's be vigilant about the Off-Site Directional Signs that a business can purchase through EDC. If the business moves or closes, the town needs to take the sign down

**MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

815 RIVERSIDE DRIVE • NO. GROSVENORDALE, CONNECTICUT 06255  
TELEPHONE (860) 923-9475 • FAX (860) 923-9897

IV. Citizen's Comments Pertaining to Agenda Items: none

V. Old Business: (Thompson Grown Brochure was supposed to be listed)

1. R. Blackmer reviewed price quotes compiled by Lynn Landry, a member of the Agriculture Commission to be used for an update of the Thompson Grown brochure. There is no Thompson-based business which can do the printing. No grants are available. C. Obert asked that it be inclusive of all agriculture-based entities. R. Blackmer has made 4 contacts to see if new businesses want to be included, and refreshed the content. The consensus was to use the higher-quality paper (80 lb gloss) mirroring the current brochure, print 3,000 copies which will provide adequate coverage but not a major surplus, and to authorize \$469 to make the purchase from Kerrin graphics, Dudley. The Town is tax exempt. **(M/S/C Santos/Larkin)** to approve as agreed upon carried unanimously. Note was made that once completed, it should be uploaded to the website.

2. Progress from Branding Leadership Team: C. Obert reported that Rene Waldron has been elected Chair; Charlene Langlois, Vice Chair. They will meet the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM targeting about 1 ½ hours. They are aware that EDC has not approved the Branding Plan. The consensus was to reverse the list of Recommendations, since some later on the list are more quickly implemented, then look to the 19-20 FY budget to ask for an Economic Development Director. B. Santos: suggest adding 2 items to Section 5, Recommendations. 1) Grants: to identify potential sources of funding from Governmental, NGO or Private Foundations, and 2) Special Projects such as a 5K race to build community involvement. Angela Newell (Recreation Director) may have information about race organizers. B. Santos: suggests adding a way to track the Recommendations by establishing 1) Priority items and 2) to Track Accountability.

Mention was made of using the media to improve connectivity throughout the town, including by Boards/Commissions and organizations such as Trails. B. Loffredo stated the Branding group felt social media development is very important. Perhaps a template or sample module can be created for ease of use and consistency. The next step in that regard is to search for a Social Media specialist to raise Thompson's profile and establish the framework which will allow the town to rise to the top in a search engine inquiry.

K. Beausoleil reviewed the current status of the website and the new facebook page, which has 2 staff people trained to receive materials and after ascertaining there are no legal issues involved in the text, to handle the posting. A considerable number of questions and scenarios were discussed.

K. Beausoleil reminded the Committee that a RFP is going out from the Social Media Committee; B. Santos asks for the schedule (daytime) and he and C. Obert will try to attend. The funding is available until June 30, in the line item named "personnel;" the RFP will require demonstrations of the previous work of the applicant, the talents and expertise. R. Larkin: the individual needs search engine optimization skills; the redevelopment efforts will best be fulfilled when potentially interested parties see the website, as well as potential new businesses. K. Beausoleil asked the Committee members to keep ideas flowing to the Branding Committee Chair R. Waldron. He agrees it makes sense to begin to implement the plan with faster action items. C. Obert will ask R. Waldron and M A Chinatti to include on the Branding Committee's agenda a place for EDC ideas/comments. R. Blackmer, member of the Branding Committee: next meeting is in 2 weeks, Wednesday, April 4 and is open to the public. All contributions from the community are welcome.

3. Update on the possibility of a road race event in September: Combining a race event with Community Day, often the last Sunday in September was favorably reviewed.

#### VI. New Business

- a. Request for Recommendation - \$7,500 from EDC budget for legal consultant to prepare development agreement re 929 Riverside Drive: K. Beausoleil: the short-term consultant will support the economic development initiatives, will be a specialist, someone very familiar and experienced with redevelopment projects, who will work effectively with prospects, understanding their needs.  
(M/S/C Obert/Santos) to appropriate \$7,500 for legal services to protect our interests and to prepare to represent the town regarding 929 Riverside Drive, this to be presented as a request to the BoS for their support in the transfer of funds, carried unanimously. M. A. Chinatti will prepare a document for this purpose.

#### Other:

- a. (M/S/C Sharpe/Obert) to add an agenda item: discussion of the 2018 Business of the Year award-carried unanimously. On Community Day, the Thompson Business of the Year will be announced. Chairman B. Yacino drafted a nomination form; several ideas for enhancement were offered. It was agreed that the form should be widely distributed and posted on facebook and the website. The exact date was not known by anyone present, but the Recreation Director has it scheduled. Forms will

need to be submitted by the Tuesday before the EDC meeting at which the finalist will be selected, allowing time to have the plaque made. **(M/S/C Yacino/Santos)** to move ahead with plans for the Thompson 2018 Business of the Year Award carried unanimously, with B. Yacino doing some modification of the form.

VII. Correspondence: none

VIII. Comments by Commission Members:

\*C. Obert: let's conduct research about current grants such as URBAN TREES, or others which may move our mission ahead

\*B. Santos: the EDC should work to expand the Off-site Directional sign program. The colored signs, with an arrow, facilitate local business

\*B. Santos: since EDC is looking to re-print the Thompson Grown brochure, consideration for re-printing a Thompson EDC Business Directory may also be timely. The topic will be added to the agenda for next month. C. Obert: is this a Special Project and should it be referred to the Branding Committee? Before next month, look at the previous brochure and assess its effectiveness as a welcoming tool that can be distributed as well as an informative tool for town residents who may not be aware of all the businesses. The facebook and website should be referenced.

IX. Next Meeting: April 18, 2018 @ 6:30 pm, Merrill Seney Room, Town Hall

X. Adjournment:

B. Yacino adjourned the meeting at 7:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted; Dorothy Durst, Recording Secretary

*Dorothy Durst*

*These minutes have not yet been approved by the Economic Development Commission. Please refer to next month's meeting minutes for approval of and/or amendments to these minutes.*