

Original - Economic Development Within Wilton

Presented November 2021

Economic Development Within Town Government

November 1, 2021

- **All board and commission members and employees have a role in ensuring Wilton remains an economically vibrant community equally attractive to businesses, residents and investors.**
 - *Reasonable property taxes and fees*
 - *Policies and customer service that support and facilitates economic development*
 - *Easily obtainable data*
 - *Resources*
- **Some roles are more active or prominent than others.**
- **Purpose of this presentation is to explain those more prominent roles.**

**Director of Land Use Management/Town Planner and First Selectwoman
November 1, 2021**

- **Director of Land Use Management and Town Planner Michael Wrinn and/or First Selectwoman Lynne Vanderslice are the go-to points of contacts**
- **We meet with and maintain contact and/or relationships with**
 - *Current commercial property owners and businesses*
 - *Potential developers*
 - *Commercial real estate brokers*
 - *Potential new businesses*
- **What are some examples?**
 - *We recently met with a site selector for a national chain to discuss possible locations in Wilton*
 - *We recently leveraged our relationship with Eversource to expedite the natural gas connection for a new business*
 - *We recommended the owner of the underperforming commercial building at 2 Hollyhock Rd repurpose the building to apartments through a friendly 8-30g. Resulted in P&Z approval of 18 units, 30% of which were affordable*

First Selectwoman's Office November 1, 2021

- **The First Selectwoman's Office, primarily through Community Affairs Coordinator Sarah Gioffre, executes traditional economic development strategies**
- **Partnering with local and state organizations to promote Wilton**
 - *AdvanceCT*
 - *CT Office of Tourism*
 - *Wilton Chamber of Commerce*
 - *Realtors and business owners*
 - *Parks and Recreation*
 - *Wilton Garden Club*
- **Facilitating access to information**
 - *Increasing online access*
 - *Connecting to resources*
- **What are some examples?**
 - *Developed online Guide to Opening or Expanding a Business in Wilton.*
 - *Implementing online access to Land Use records*
 - *Summer Concert Series at Schenck's and Merwin, Eat Local/Shop Local/Win Local in Wilton, Scarecrow Scavenger Hunt and similar activities.*
 - *Developed 40 Things We Love About Wilton in response to a realtor's suggestion. (update ongoing)*
 - *Maintain Wilton attractions and events on CTvisit.org.*
 - *Introduced and locally administer the State's Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit program, resulting in tax credits to businesses and donations to non-profits.*

Appointed Economic Development Commission November 1, 2021

- **The appointed Economic Development Commission contributes towards Wilton being a vibrant business community**
- **Marketing Activities**
- **Resource to Businesses**
- **What are some examples?**
 - *Instagram and TikTok based awareness campaign*
 - *Collaboration with the Wilton Chamber to develop customized business promotions*
 - *Forum for Wilton's retailers*
 - *Webinar on shared workspaces*
 - *2017 It's Working in Wilton and resident videos*
 - *2016 analytics study and business survey*

EDC Strategies as Developed by Original EDC Member

Presented in 2014

Appointed Economic Development Commission 2014 Strategic Recommendations and Implementation Status

The 2014 Wilton Economic Development Commission recommended the following five strategies “to preserve and enhance economic development for the Town”.

- Create and maintain dedicated economic development website as a key communication vehicle to attract new businesses, support existing businesses, and inform the public
 - *Implemented in 2015*
 - *Rejected by future versions of the EDC.*
- Establish a rapid response team to address the urgent needs of new and existing businesses
 - *Have not been able to successfully implement*
- Launch a nurturing program for Wilton town leaders to open lines of communication, build relationships, foster retention and cultivate expansion of existing businesses
 - *Has not implemented*
- Deploy ongoing marketing outreach programs for the target market to attract and welcome new businesses
 - Created marketing tools. Hasn't been ongoing marketing
- Create a long-term, strategic blueprint for Wilton's commercial corridor and Town Center and prioritize locations for development and re- development to ensure that the vision of the Town as a prosperous, charming and viable community to live, work and play is continually advanced
 - *Now responsibility of Planning and Zoning Commission with assistance Michael Wrinn and consultants*

POCD Implementation Steps Assigned to the EDC as Primarily Responsible

Determined in 2019

POCD-Economic Development Commission Assignments-Implementation Steps

Implementation Steps

- Consider establishing a local or multi-town arts council to better coordinate, market and promote historical, rural, arts and cultural tourism in Wilton, as part of a larger region.
- Work collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce to establish a business visitation program to identify issues and opportunities.
- Consider opportunities for enabling more seasonal events and activities in Cannondale. Explore using the train station parking area for weekend or off-peak events.
- Continue to monitor and participate in G&B Wire Mill redevelopment planning efforts to ensure positive impacts to Georgetown as a whole, and Wilton.
- Continue to encourage alternative transportation and commuting methods...

Implementation Steps-Better handled by staff or a consultant

- Consider potential tax and grant incentives for improvements and/or redevelopment. Implement and market the most appropriate incentives.
- Promote Wilton's talented workforce, education systems, quality of life, and character (landscape, historic resources, etc.) in marketing the Town to businesses.
- Conduct a joint PZC/ EDC process to explore changes to sign regulations to ensure the appropriate balance between business-friendliness and aesthetic quality.
- Work with CT DOT, Norwalk Transit and major employers, shopping centers, and other stakeholders to advertise and enhance bus service routes.
- Work with telecommunications providers and property owners to improve and upgrade high-bandwidth, reliable internet and cellular service throughout Town. Identify Town-owned land that could be used by telecommunications and/or cellular providers.
- Work with utility providers to promote the expansion of natural gas service.

BOS Discussions

June 2022

BOS Meeting-June 21, 2022

- **From the Town's website:** *Wilton's Economic Development Commission (EDC), a team of resident volunteers who serve as business ambassadors, can provide insights and a sincere welcome to Wilton and the business community.*

Should this be the primary focus of the EDC?----BOS to continue to consider.