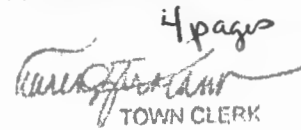


Town of Stafford  
Economic Development Commission  
Nov 21, 2023  
Veterans Meeting Room  
1 Main Street, Stafford, CT 06076

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TOWN CLERK

**Members Present:**

Anthony Armelin - Chairman  
Christopher Paradiso  
John Wittenzellner  
Larry Vaughn  
Scott Nigro  
Theresa Cramer  
Larry A. McKinney

**Others Present:**

Bill Morrison, First Selectmen  
Rick Hartenstein, Selectman/Water Pollution Control Authority  
Jacob Long, Owner, American Woolen Mills  
Eric Cross, Resident  
Beth Magura, Resident  
Donna Wright, Resident

**Agenda:**

1. Call the meeting to order/ Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approve the minutes of the July 18, 2023 meeting
3. Town Sewer Plant Expansion
4. Town Marketing Package
5. Stafford Brownfields Initiative Update
6. Tax Incentive Ordinance Adoption
7. Discussion of potential new businesses to town/Ribbon Cuttings/Supplies
8. Possible budget uses
9. New Business
10. Old Business
11. Adjournment

**Call the meeting to order/ Pledge of Allegiance**

Tony Armelin, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

**Approve the minutes of the July 18, 2023 meeting**

Larry McKinney made a motion to approve the minutes of the 7/18/23 meeting. John Wittzeller seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Town Sewer Plant Expansion**

Rick Hartenstein, Superintendent of the Water Pollution Control Authority, attended the meeting for a preliminary discussion facing the town sewer plant. He said that WPCA is at capacity. Currently, the plant can handle 1 million gallons of wastewater daily, but the system regularly sees 1.2 million gallons daily. When there is an increase to 1.3 or 1.4 million per day, the wastewater can overflow the weirs. There is another tank that can help catch the overflow, but if the water moves too fast, it can get overloaded, and wastewater ends up in the river.

Hartenstein said that bringing the system up to a 2 million gallon per day capacity would cost about \$15-\$17 million based on recently drawn-up plans. That would include three new detention tanks and could take up to three years to complete. A new facility with even higher capacity would likely cost about \$100 million.

Hartenstein also noted that during one storm this summer, the plant went from its normal flow rate to 4.3 million gallons in 45 minutes.

Many members of the commission noted that upgrading the sewer plant is a must if the town is going to expand its business base, however, figuring out how to fund it is the issue. Hartenstein said the plan is to have a meeting with multiple boards, including Selectmen, Finance, and Economic Development in January to have a more comprehensive discussion.

### **Town Marketing Package**

Theresa Cramer said that she has been working on social media posts to promote Small Business Saturday shopping in town via the Explore Stafford accounts on Facebook and Instagram. She approached the Events committee to talk about possibly putting some money to boost the posts to a wider audience. At the Events meeting, Jodi Harmon said the Main Street Business Association could provide the funds to boost the posts. Harmon agreed to provide up to \$100, and Cramer said she would pursue the possibility of having the EDC reimburse the Main Street Business Association from the EDC budget.

Nigro made a motion to approve the EDC reimbursing the Main Street Business Association up to \$100 for Small Business Saturday promotions. Paradiso seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Possible Budget Uses**

Cramer said that many of the other commissions in town were out of budget or were anticipating budget cuts in the next fiscal year. She suggested the EDC consider making its budget available to these commissions.

McKinney asked if they would have to get on the agenda and come in front of the commission. Cramer said yes. The board agreed they were open to the possibility of funding other commissions' initiatives that would promote economic development.

### **Stafford Brownfields Initiative Update**

This report usually comes from Amber Wakley-Whaley, who was not present. However, Theresa Cramer mentioned that one of the properties that comes up when Wakley-Whaley is applying for brownfield grants is Staffordville School. She said the school is not likely to be in rough enough condition to get brownfield status, so she had been thinking about reuse options. She suggested the possibility of reaching out to the UCONN School of Business or other programs to see if it could be used as an incubator space for new businesses.

McKinney expressed concern about possible heating costs. Cramer suggested grants or a small rent from each tenant could be collected and a tax incentive provided to offset the rent.

Paradiso suggested that the school would make a better hotel and asked Jacob Long, owner of American Woolen Mills, who was in the audience if he ever brings people to town who need hotel rooms. Long indicated that he did.

Hartenstein said he thought the Witt School was a better location for a hotel.

Long said he knew of a company with a green process for tanning leather that could be a good fit for that space.

### **Tax Incentive Ordinance Adoption**

Armelin asked if there were any files or other information left from the last administration regarding the possible tax incentive ordinance that had been suggested by former First Selectman Sal Titus.

Wittenzeller said he had texted Titus about it and that the town's lawyer was not currently working on a draft of an ordinance. He then asked the Selectmen who were present if they had seen any documentation. Both Morrison and Hartenstein said they had never heard anything about it. Morrison asked for an email with information, asking him to look into the matter.

### **Discussion of potential new businesses to town/Ribbon Cuttings/Supplies**

Wittenzeller said that he had spoken to Kolossos about a potential ribbon cutting over the summer.

Cramer brought up the pending site application for storage units at the Country Village Shoppes. Dr. David Mordasky, who is on the Planning and Zoning Commission, provided some details about the project and said that PZC Chair Dave Palberg had done his homework and gave the

engineer a list of issues that would need to be addressed before the commission could approve the application.

#### **New Business**

Eric Cross, Stafford resident, said he wants to open an autobody shop at 44 West Road across from O'Reilly Auto Parts. Cross previously owned a shop in West Springfield but recently moved to town and wanted to start his own shop again after working for others. He would be renting the space, which is already a garage space.

#### **Old Business**

None.

Before the meeting ended, Morrison asked to say a few words. He said he was excited about this commission and that it has the potential to have a big impact on town. He asked whose job it was to go out and solicit new business.

Armelin indicated that some members of the committee, specifically Nigro, had called up businesses like Aldi's to see if they were interested in building in town but that the business is not.

The commission suggested that soliciting new businesses is the job of the First Selectman but that it was happy to support his efforts.

#### **Adjournment**

At 8:14 p.m., Paradiso made a motion to adjourn, and Wittenzeller seconded. The motion passed.

*Morrison*  
11/28/23