

Town of Trumbull
Economic and Community Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.
Trumbull Town Hall Long Hill Conference Room

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission of the Town of Trumbull was held in Trumbull Town Hall Long Hill Conference Room on May 6, 2025.

Attendance

Members Present: Beryl Kaufman (Chairman)
 Justin Scheuble (Vice Chairman)
 Evelyn Zamary (Secretary)

Members Absent: Massimo Mallozzi
 Leyla Fayyaz
 Marshal Marcus
 Terrence Griffiths
 Fred Petrossi

Also Present: Rina Bakalar – Director of Economic & Community Development
 Gia Mentillo – Clerk
 Trumbull Community Television

Chairman Kaufman called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of April 1, 2025, Minutes

The approval of the April 1, 2025 meeting minutes was deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission (ECDC).

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kaufman stated the most recent community meeting on the Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use Study went very well with a thorough presentation from the study consultants and excellent explanations from Director Bakalar which helped to make the information more understandable to the public.

The Chairman said the new public art mural on Merritt Blvd. looks fantastic, noting she would like to see more public art in Town. The Director stated the Town has gotten tremendous amounts of positive feedback on the mural. She stated this project's implementation to be the culmination of efforts from Pam Keough of CT Make-A-Wish, Representative Sarah Keitt, town officials, and Trumbull ECD staff. The mural is important for the area in terms of place making and attracting interest in the location. CT Make-A-Wish will be expanding their walk-a-thon to include the mural location.

Director's Report

Business Update:

The Director stated that several improvements have been made to the Trumbull Corporate Park over recent years, including way finding signage and the installation of the new public art mural. She invited

the Commission to attend the mural ribbon cutting on Saturday, May 10th at 4:30p.m., noting this will be a kickoff to Make-A-Wish's event happening that evening.

Director Bakalar informed that the conversation on the tax abatement agreement between the Town and Kubtec has been continued to the May 8th Town Council meeting as some language in the agreement is being refined. The Director stated that the Tax Partnership Screening Committee has been working in a bipartisan manner to establish this agreement and thanked Committee members Jason Marsh, Carl Massaro, Michael Colohan, Fred Petrossi, and Massimo Mallozzi for their efforts. Should this agreement go through, Kubtec will take ownership of 75 Merritt Blvd. and move their entire operations to Trumbull, bringing with them their existing 44 member workforce and adding approximately 30 more high level jobs in the coming years. Kubtec intends to make significant improvement to the facility and property, including the incorporation of a 150 person auditorium which will host medical professionals from throughout the world. Director Bakalar stated this will be good for both the Trumbull Corporate Park and economy of the Town as a whole. The Director informed that Kubtec taking ownership of this property will effectively stabilize the tax base of the property and remediate the declining asset which has had several owners since 2014, remained largely vacant, and is currently in foreclosure status. Establishing a tax abatement agreement with the company will not result in any decrease to the existing tax revenue from the property, rather the taxes will be frozen at their current amount for the first 10 years of Kubtec's ownership then increase on a phased tax schedule for the second 10 years of ownership.

Director Bakalar stated there will be upcoming ribbon cuttings for Tzumi Japanese at 123 Monroe Tpke. and Head of Hair Salon at the Trumbull Mall soon. Head of Hair Salon is a complimentary business to Naturally U which is in the adjoining store front under the same ownership.

The Director reminded the Commission that 6 Cambridge Drive has all the necessary approvals for a storage facility. She informed that several groups have has the property under contract, but each has so far been unsuccessful in finding a way to make it financially viable given the significant demolition and constructions costs and high interest rates. The company currently under LOI for the property is hopeful that the gray field program being proposed by the governor might ultimately help them facilitate this project, however, Ms. Bakalar noted this funding is not certain and could take too long to access to keep the deal alive.

Director Bakalar informed that there have been many organizations coming to her with interest in the Trumbull Mall area since the Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use Study made its way into several news articles. She stated the Town is looking to stick to the vision set forth by this study for the area but they will be flexible on the details of how that comes about. The vision is to create a vibrant, mixed-use district with a work, live, play environment. The Director and the Town are working to seed necessary partnerships with the state that will help to unlock the potential of this region, including working toward applying to become a designated community under the CT Development Authority. The Town will also be submitting zoning regulation amendments (as outlined in the study) for consideration to the PZC in June to pave a pathway for this vision. These changes are necessary for the Town to qualify for benefits through the CT Development Authority. The Director asked for the ECDC's support on this matter. Per commissioners' inquiries, the Director clarified that the Town or a property owner may submit requests for zoning amendments for any given property. Director Bakalar informed that the current mall owner, Namdar, has recently defaulted on their debt and the Town is keeping a close eye on the situation. She noted that Zoning Enforcement Officer Brian Fitzgerald is actively pursuing issues of blight at the mall and has conducted a comprehensive review of the property. The Director is regularly

in communication with real estate representatives of the big box owners on site as their covenants control a lot of what can and cannot happen on the property.

Per Commissioner Scheuble's inquiry, the Director clarified that there is no set linear path to attaining the future vision for this area. However, she informed that no redevelopment is likely to occur while the ownership is unsure of their future with the property. Any new ownership of the property would impact the way next steps unfold. Currently, the Director and Town are focusing on understanding the barriers that exist to unlocking the potential of the real estate, fielding opportunities from interested parties, identifying potential state resources to supplement financing and infrastructure needs, and preparing the area from a zoning, community, and public sector perspective.

Community Development Update:

Director Bakalar stated that an application for 124 units of senior housing (with 10% of units being designated affordable) at 12 Cambridge Drive may be on the May PZC agenda. She informed that representatives of 2225 Reservoir Avenue are also working to submit an application for senior housing in the same area. The Director stated she is not in favor of this project for several reasons which make this a poor economic development decision: (1) the potential units from both senior housing projects proposed would exceed 279 units and may not be market feasible, especially as they may be leasing up at the same time in extremely close proximity; (2) the property is commercially viable and the practice has not been to turn commercially viable properties to housing (this property did not even hit the open market); (3) all planning documents (prepared with broad community input) pertaining to this area state that this location is ideal for a neighborhood scale commercial hub which is very much needed for the area; and (4) If approved, this could negate the 12 Cambridge Drive property due to market saturation and that surplus property at 12 Cambridge has no other commercial viability and will not otherwise develop negatively impacting our Grand List.

The Director will be putting together a team to work on the Upper Long Hill Schoolhouse restoration project. John Naeher of Christina Heritage School has recently assessed the structure components to determine what aspects can be salvaged. The Director will work with a team to put together a budget for the project, facilitate fund raising efforts, and identify a location for the structure. Public Works officials George Estrada and Dmitri Paris feel there is potential for putting the structure on the Town Hall campus where it can be utilized as additional meeting space.

Planning Update:

Director Bakalar informed that Town staff are working to review the final draft of the Trumbull POCD, and she will share a copy of the plan with the Commission once it is finalized. She informed that there are statutory timeframes to follow for adoption of the document, adding that she will share a timeline for this with the Commission in the coming days. She noted Rob Librandi, Town Planner as lead staff on this effort.

Per Commissioner Zamar's inquiry, Director Bakalar informed that the appeal of the project at 1 Trefoil Drive has been filed will be going to court.

Event Update:

Director Bakalar stated that the ECD Department hosted the Fairfield County Commercial Broker Network luncheon at CT Make A Wish on April 28, 2025. David Kooris who leads of the CT Development Authority spoke at the event.

There will be a free Business Resource Fair on May 20, 2025 at the Trumbull Library in partnership with the CT Small Business Development Administration. All exhibitors offer free resources to businesses. The department and Commission will have a table at the event, and ECD Commissioners are encouraged to attend. The Director thanked Commissioner Zamaro for offering to cover this table. Ms. Bakalar noted Gia Mentillo's efforts to help organize this event.

The Director informed she is working with Paul Timpanelli to plan a bus tour of Oxford Commons in mid-to-late summer with key staff, commissioners, and potentially Trumbull Center representatives to view an excellent example of a mixed-use development. This area boasts an array of businesses, residential use, walkability, recreation opportunities, and exemplifies successful placemaking efforts.

The Chairman inquired about a site on Madison Avenue that appears to have work being done, and the Director stated she would look into this further and follow up.

Director Bakalar stated that PHA is targeting before the end of this year to move into the facility being constructed at 6600 Main Street. The entrance for the site will be near Gisella Road.

BRBC Update

There was no update from the BRBC.

Opportunity for Community Input

There were no members of the public present during the meeting.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:17p.m. by Commissioner Scheuble and seconded by Commissioner Zamaro. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Gia Mentillo, ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi