Chair: Bonnie Bercowetz, Vice Chair Michelle Bononi, Commissioner Lenny Hudgen, Commissioner Jerry Katrichis, Commissioner Siddiq Abdullah and Commissioner Robert Firger were all present.

Absent: Commissioner Martin Geitz, Commissioner Nyandah Robinson and Commissioner Steve Zelman were excused with prior notice.

Also present: Mr. Robert Smith, Town Manager, Mr. Michael Goman of Goman + York, Mr. David Driver of Goman + York, Ms. Denise Robidoux of Goman + York, Mr. David Mann, Town Councilman, Mr. Kevin Gough, Town Councilman and the Director of Planning & Economic Development, Mr. Jose Giner.

1. Call to Order:

Chair Bercowetz called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

2. Roll Call:

A Quorum was established with 6 voting members.

3. Consent Agenda:

a. Monthly Written Report (Consultant)

Chair Bercowetz requested an update on the creation of the bus stop near the local Trader Joe’s WCD Center in Bloomfield. She also inquired about the EDC being in attendance during the Council’s Strategic Meetings concerning this matter and other similar matters. Mr. Michael Goman, Mr. David Driver and Ms. Robidoux of Goman + York had input. They are working with Trader Joe’s WCD Center to create the requested bus stop. This bus stop was requested because a person was hit by a vehicle in that area.

In reference to Council’s Strategic Meetings, Mr. Goman stated the EDC is welcome to attend strategic meetings. The last strategic meeting was an informal meeting he requested.

Mr. Robert Smith asked the Chair if she would be interested in meeting and she stated yes. Mr. Robert Smith said that he would set up a meeting with Chair Bercowetz and Vice Chair Bononi.

b. Monthly Written Report (Staff)

Chair Bercowetz asked Mr. Giner to list all businesses by name in the staff reports and she inquired about EZIQC meaning. Mr. Giner stated he will place business names on the staff reports. And he explained, he’s not an expert but EZIQC is a way to qualify contractors. The Chair asked why they switched contractors. Mr. Giner stated he would find out and get back to her with further information on the EZIQC and the reason they switched contractors.
4. Minutes:
   a. November 12, 2019

   Commissioner Firger made a motion to approve the November 12, 2019 minutes with corrections and Commissioner Abdullah seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the November 12, 2019 minutes with corrections.

5. Public Comments:

   At the last EDC meeting Ms. Linda Pagani had comments and questions concerning the Complete Streets Report and Policy Program. During this meeting, Ms. Pagani asked will this matter be discussed and action taken? Chair Bercowetz stated it will be discussed later in the meeting.

6. Old Business:

   a. EDC Standing Committee on Ordinances:

      This matter was tabled until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting.

   b. Public Art and Other Initiative to attract visitors:

      Commissioner Firger spoke concerning this matter. He said he spoke with Elizabeth from the Prosser Public Library concerning the Town’s potential Arts Program. She was extremely helpful and she gave great insight into the matter. He suggested collaborating with the Library on the Town’s Arts Program.

      The Library’s website is up and running. They have 53 events scheduled for the next few weeks. And their website viewing has increased from 200 to 6,300. He stated with their success it would be a step in the right direction to include them in moving this project forward.

      He also stated that it is critical to hire a Public Relations Person experienced in social media. Commissioner Firger also spoke with Ms. Sharon Mann about starting a small event, reinstating the Drum Festivals and creating pop up events. He stated there are Artists that have pop up events in their homes to display their work.

      Commissioner Firger recommend asking local owners of vacant properties to allow the Town to sponsor pop ups on their property. Chair Bercowetz stated the pop ups should be kid and family friendly. Commissioner Abdullah suggested creating temporary art walls and murals.

      Commissioner Firger stated the Greater Hartford Arts Council presently have a formal application to fill out for grants. They distribute grants to 35 - 40 communities for arts. He
suggested starting the Arts Program with small events, raise funds outside of the Town and utilize The University of Hartford’s resources. He also stated cultural diversity is a draw.

The Commissioners were on board with Commissioner Firger comments and recommendations. Town Manager Mr. Robert Smith also agreed with the Library’s involvement.

Chair Bercowetz informed the Commission that Ms. Denise Robidoux has created a job description for the Town’s Public Relations job position.

Commissioner Firger stated student involvement would be welcomed and they could also work in the Town on the Arts Program.

Chair Bercowetz asked if they have any students in mind. Mr. David Mann stated that he believes that University of Hartford students would want to be involved in this project. Commissioner Firger stated he spoke to Ms. Nancy Steward from the school and she stated the students would be happy to engage.

Commissioner Hudgen recommend using the new senior center for some art projects.

Mr. Giner recommend Town Hall’s corridor because Art is already being displayed there on the walls.

Commissioner Firger recommend creating a website to bring people from other Towns to Bloomfield Art Projects.

Chair Bercowetz stated outdoor art should be included.

Vice Chair Bononi stated that every Art Festival she has noted started small. She stated she was employed in Ann Arbor for over 12 years. She directed the group to the Ann Arbor Street Fair which became so huge that the town residents left town during the event because there were too many people at the event. She named other states with Festivals that started small and ended up large. She believes people love summer events. People think about art and art galleries opening but not everyone is comfortable attending them because of the dress code. They think you have to dress up. She stated it is a great idea if something simple can be created and started during the summer.

In conclusion, the Public Relations job description position has been received by the Commission all recommendations and comments will be considered.

c. Discussion re: Draft Complete Streets Report and Policy

There was some discussion at the last EDC meeting about the Consultants on this project attending the EDC meetings to answer questions concerning the Draft Complete Streets Report and Policy.
At this meeting, Mr. Giner stated the EDC requested the Consultants on this project to attend a meeting to give a presentation and answer questions. However, the contract with the Consultants stated they only have a certain number of meetings. Mr. Giner explained to EDC there’s only one meeting left under the contract. He stated it is a Council driven study requiring a discussion with Mr. Mann and the subcommittees to see how they want to handle the situation. He asked, should it be an overall Council meeting or create a joint meeting to do the presentation, inviting the Land Use Committee, the EDC, the school board and other people of interest? He stated Public Works has also participated in the meetings with the Consultants. Most departments sent a representative to the prior meetings with the Consultants. Mr. Giner suggest having one last meeting and including everyone’s questions. Otherwise the Town will have to pay for another separate meeting.

Chair Bercowetz asked why?

Mr. Giner explained it is in the signed contract that a limited amount of meetings will be available.

Chair Bercowetz feels if the Consultants think the EDC opinions concerning the Report and Policy matters they should meet with the EDC. They should give the EDC a presentation and answer any and all questions EDC may have concerning the matter. Chair Bercowetz stated she do not feel comfortable taking a position on this matter without a proper presentation, a question and answer session by the EDC to the Consultants.

Vice Chair Bononi stated the Complete Streets Report and Policy document is extremely important, it goes with improving streets like the work done on the Town Center. She continued that there are other documented reports that should be considered like the Town Center Plan and the Plan of Conservation and Development. There should also include feedback from DPW and the Town Engineer. She stated, what concerns her most isn’t their individual plans for improvements because the Town has a long way to go. She feels the policy is problematic. The only way it can be addressed is if the person or organization who wrote the policy can meet with EDC and answer questions. She doesn’t believe that it’s not a two question deal either. The questions are from an economic development standpoint and a planning standpoint. Offering to have a big meeting with different groups doesn’t seem like an efficient way to get EDC’s questions answered. The fact that an organization doesn’t see it worth their time to meet and answer questions is rather puzzling to her. If they have been asked to do this and won’t because it’s not in their terms or contract, then that is their position. Have they been formally asked for a meeting with EDC?

Mr. Giner stated their position is they want to come but must they also attend a Council meeting. They stated they provide a set amount of meetings that they have agreed on in the
contract and the client gets to pick the ones they want to them to attend. Once those meetings have been satisfied in the contract all other meetings will be charged a fee.

Vice Chair Bononi asked, so this group of professionals have no flexibility to entertain the EDC’s request? She stated they have the right to do that but not every professional organization operates that way. She has extensive experience with professional organization similar to this one but she has never encountered this situation.

Commissioner Firger asked for clarification in this matter. He asked Mr. Giner did they literally say you only get a certain amount of meetings, you pick the ones you want to attend and any additional meetings will be an extra charged? Mr. Giner state yes these were their terms in the contract but they owe one more meeting. Mr. Giner stated they have not given him the fee for extra meetings.

Vice Chair Bononi stated if that’s their bottom line then that’s their bottom line. But it leaves the EDC with a lot of unanswered questions. These questions will not be resolved by a group meeting. Land Use and Council have every right to determine who gets the last meeting. However, if Land Use or Council is looking for recommendations from the EDC with regards to what these documents say and what EDC want them to say that’s another matter.

Commissioner Firger stated that the EDC should neither demand nor beg at this point. He feels the EDC should formally request a meeting. He agrees the EDC needs to hear from the Consultants on a smaller group discussion basis. He thinks an EDC and Consultant meeting is key.

Commissioner Abdullah stated EDC must look at the situation from the Consultants perspective. What is their stake in the policy being approved? Were they hired to just write the policy or were they hired to write the policy for approval? If so, the part of getting approved is on them. If it was to only write the policy they have done their job and whatever they say about the number of meetings stand. If they have no stake in approval they don’t want to commit to another meeting. Commissioner Siddiq stated at this point it is unclear on whose stake it is to get the policy approved. He stated if they were required to write it and get it approved they would want to satisfy EDC’s request for a meeting. But if their requirements were just to write it they have fulfilled their obligation. If the Town Council request information from the EDC concerning this matter there are two options, either state that the EDC doesn’t have enough information therefore EDC doesn’t have an opinion. Or EDC can agree with it without the much needed information. He agrees with Vice Chair Bononi’s statement and she has documented material. Her questions can’t be answered by the EDC or Town Staff. The Consultants who wrote the policy should come and face her to satisfy her questions. Maybe there are answers in the policy and some questions were anticipated and have been answered in it. However, it should be their task to come and answer questions presented to them by this board.
Commissioner Katrichis stated the EDC has serious issues with the documentation and he agrees a meeting is necessary to clear those issues up.

Commissioner Hudgen asked when the policy was written. Mr. Giner stated over the last year. Commissioner Hudgen also agreed that the Consultants should entertain a time frame for questions from the EDC. He suggest a meeting lasting an hour or two hours.

Mr. Robert Smith stated any policy that is being created eventually comes before the Council and it is their decision to pass the policy as it stands. They direct staff to create policy for issues they see occurring out in public. He fully supports everyone’s ability to input into the policy. He feels this is America and that is what we do in this country. If EDC has concerns with the policy as it stands, he feels some of those expressions should be presented to the Council.

The EDC should list their problematic concerns and let the Council know they need further information. After which, let the Council decide if they want to talk to the Consultants or not about creating time for the EDC to have a direct meeting. Or they might want to incorporate the EDC into one of their meetings with the Consultants. The Council has more weight and the command as to which way that issue is going to go. The funding of it, the administration of it and whether it gets implemented or not. It’s all under the control of the Council. If you are concerned about it and you feel you have a role and duty to provide input by creating enough information for Council to understand the gravity of your concerns - that would be the route to follow. He also stated he would take this matter and pass it to Mr. Giner who should pass it to the Council.

Chair Bercowetz stated there is a macro issue and a micro issue. The macro issue is that this specific report, the EDC has been informed that they are an Advisory Commission appointed by the Town Manager and the EDC’s job is to give their point of view from a business perspective in this Town. On the micro basis the EDC can’t because they have questions that cannot be answered within this Commission. EDC can have suppositions but no conversations for information. On the macro view this is why Vice Chair Bononi spoke about referral matters of interest. These issues come up often and the EDC take their responsibility to have informed opinions. She stated that the EDC cannot do this concerning this matter. If it’s too far down the road and it’s something Council doesn’t want to ask the group to do, fine, the EDC will do what they need to do. The EDC is trying to highlight an ongoing situation were the EDC is asked to comment on matters but the EDC hasn’t been asked to attend a meeting. And the EDC hasn’t had a presentation. That is a disservice to the Council and to the Commission.

Mr. Mann apologized for missing the last few meetings. He missed them because of the election. He was under the impression that EDC was going to have a presentation. He stated the Council clearly wants the EDC’s input. His question to the EDC is, since there is one more meeting left, can they join Council at that meeting, or does EDC want their own presentation?
Vice Chair Bononi stated that in response to Mr. Smith’s suggestions which hold a lot of weight, she can see doing that, however, she has fifty (50) questions to ask the Consultants. What she finds interesting is that Mr. Giner sent the Department of Public Works and The Town Engineers comments to the EDC. Being privy to that additional information, some of Vice Chair’s questions were answered. She stated many were also exacerbated by their questions. To suggest the EDC distill what their concerns are and present them to Council is putting the cart before the horse because if there is someone who can answer the outstanding information that EDC has then the items EDC presents to Council are final recommendations which should be considerably smaller. Being that EDC was under the impression that they were going to have that opportunity. And now EDC has even more questions from professional staff it would be good to know, 1) was this policy specifically written for Bloomfield, 2) or is it a boiler plate that was drawn for all of the other communities that these professional consultants represented because they have a list of communities who have adopted with them. If the document is a boiler plate, Vice Chair stated she can understand a lot of the questions because it’s very general. However, if this document is specifically written for Bloomfield it doesn’t fit. She asked how they can make it work. She stated she doesn’t see adopting policy because it sounds nice. This has to be a Bloomfield policy. She thinks the Town Engineer and DPW said that. Her questions are coming from that standpoint. Vice Chair Bononi stated her standpoint is coming from an economic development impact of this policy.

After extensive discussion concerning this matter, Chair Bercowetz stated she would be willing to entertain a small joint meeting to get some questions answered. Or maybe the EDC can send all of their questions to the Consultants before the meeting so they can answer them at the meeting. She stated as a group, at this point they can take a stand. Chair Bercowetz suggested setting up one more meeting with the Consultants. Everyone will send comments to Mr. Giner and Mr. Giner will send the questions and comments to the Consultants to be answered at the next meeting.

Chair Bercowetz asked the Commission to make a motion to table this topic until the next EDC meeting.

Vice Chair Bononi made a motion to table/continue this topic until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting in order for the EDC to have an opportunity to determine if EDC will or will not have the benefit of the Consultants presence to answer EDC’s questions and comments. Commissioner Katrichis seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to table/continue the topic at the January 7, 2020 meeting.

7. **New Business:**

   a. **Discussion of Incentives to Attract Restaurant and Retail Uses to the Town Center.**
This matter was tabled until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting.

b. Discussion re FY 20-21 Budget request.
This matter was tabled until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting.

c. Discussion re: Referrals Concerning Matters of Interest to the Board
This matter was tabled until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting.

9. Commission Member Updates:
This matter was tabled until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting.

10. Public Comments: None

11. Staff Reports:
   a. Town Project updates
   This report was included in the EDC’s packet.

   b. TIF Study Progress
   This matter was tabled until the January 7, 2020 EDC meeting.

12. EDC Consultant Reports (Goman + York):
   a. Additional Reporting and Information
   This report was included in the EDC packet.

13. Adjournment:
   Vice Chair Bononi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Firger seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

   NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 14, 2019