Chair: Bonnie Bercowetz, Vice Chair Michelle Bononi, Commissioner Jerry Katrichis, Commissioner Siddiq Abdullah, Commissioner Nyandah Robinson, Commissioner Martin Geitz, Commissioner Steve Zelman and Commissioner Robert Firger were all present.

Absent: Commissioner Lenny Hudgen was absent.

Also present: Mr. Don Poland, 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. José 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 8 voting members.

3. Consent Agenda:
   a. Monthly Written Report (Consultant)
   b. Monthly Written Report (Staff)

   Commissioner Firger made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Zelman seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda.

   Included in the EDC documentation was a Town of Bloomfield Monthly Report dated December 2019 entitled, “Engineering Construction Projects for December 2019.” Mr. Giner explained to the EDC that the report contained in the heading the name of the projects, status, timeline, percent done, updated comments and type.

   Mr. Giner explained that the Engineering Construction Project Report gives insight into the projects progress, stages and status being done in the Town of Bloomfield. A goal of Mr. Giner is to get this documentation online so people can look up the status of a particular project in the Town of Bloomfield.

4. Minutes:
   a. December 14, 2019

   Commissioner Firger made a motion to approve the December 14, 2019 minutes with corrections and Commissioner Abdullah seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the December 14, 2019 minutes with corrections.

5. Public Comments: None

6. Old Business:
   a. EDC Standing Committee on Ordinances:
Vice Chair Bononi stated Dr. Poland has made a considerable amount of progress with this project over the past few months. Dr. Poland has created a Draft Preliminary Report. Vice Chair Bononi stated she and Dr. Poland will review his findings regarding their original concerns and definition in terms of solar farms. She stated they will respond to them. The two of them are trying to find a practical way the Town can review an application for a solar farm in case the Town gets one. Even if they do not receive an application for a solar farm, they would like to be prepared by having the right documentation to support the review of an application. She turned the matter over to Dr. Poland to summarize his Preliminary Report to the EDC. She stated at the close of his input, questions could be asked and they would be answered. Afterward, the final report will include steps to move forward. Both of them can answer preliminary questions but at this point they cannot address the whole subject. They are working in phases and can address questions as such.

Dr. Poland briefly went over the Preliminary Report he created. He stated he also conducted an assessment of the present Ordinance concerning this matter and the results were that more research and planning is needed. He spoke about megawatts and the different jurisdictional entities one must go through to be approved based on the amount of megawatts of any given project.

Dr. Poland suggested that he and Vice Chair Bononi meet to discuss the Preliminary Report and finalize it. He stated this Community should support renewable energy. They agreed to meet for further discussion of this matter.

Vice Chair Bononi stated they are looking at: 1) timing situations, 2) how many acres of developable property is available - it appears there are 130,000.00 acres, 3) how much of this acreage is Town owned, 4) will the Town of Bloomfield benefit from the energy renewal program, and 5) all people involved cannot be left out.

Vice Chair Bononi stated the Draft Preliminary Report can go out to anyone that wants to review it and discuss it.

Commissioner Geitz stated the Siting Council has authority on any project that is over one (1) megawatt. Can they impose something that is not agreeable to the Town?

Dr. Poland stated if someone creates an alternative energy source (solar farm) under one (1) megawatt they do not fall under regulations. He also stated that one (1) megawatt or more goes to the Siting Council. He stated documentation must be drafted to show the community’s views or desires.

Mr. Giner agreed with Dr. Poland, he stated they can propose a Regulation that shows the Town’s interest in having the Siting Council Consider those issues that are important to the Town. The Town has Standing and Appeal and has a better chance of having their issues
considered if they have been thought out ahead of time and are not just reactive to the particular application.

Vice Chair Bononi stated local government should spell out which lands should be conservation property and contain species that need protection.

Commissioner Zelman stated the Town should move forward concerning this matter and not wait.

Commissioner Firger stated he’s in favor of alternative energy and believes it is beneficial to the Town. He gave example of benefits but stated they must protect conservation land and animals.

Commissioner Abdullah stated he supports alternative energy and hopes it’s done in this Town during his life time.

Commissioner Robinson also supports alternative energy.

Vice Chair Bononi and Dr. Poland will continue researching and revising the Draft Preliminary Report until it is finalized. Vice Chair Bononi stated they will make sure everyone gets the Report, including the Public.

b. Public Art and Other Initiatives to attract visitors:

Commissioner Firger spoke about an Article in the Hartford Courant that stated health is improved by Arts. He also stated he met with Ms. Sharon Mann about inventoritying artists in Town. He asked everyone to send him artist information for the art inventory list. In the spring they plan to invite the people on the list to a public event to see who wants to be involved. They are also presently designing events like the Drum Festival. They plan to work closely with the Library to plan local neighborhood arts events. The University of Hartford’s Art School is another resource that this Town can use. They are extremely interested in working with the Town.

He informed the EDC that the Town of Windsor has renovated their train center and included arts. He stated the Town can have similar sites and pop up sites until they find a permanent site. Chair Bercowetz stated the old school has two levels and may be used as a pop up site for arts. Commissioner Firger suggest having a one day tour of the Artist space and have an Arts Day in the Town of Bloomfield. Ms. Robidoux will speak to the Duncaster Group. Commissioner Firger stated they came to his attention and he plan to invite them. Commissioner Katrichis stated it is an important initiative and he would like to get involved. Vice Chair Bononi stated it would be great for the Town.

Commissioner Geitz asked what the role of the Town would be. Commissioner Firger stated the Town Manager is interested, Elizabeth Lane from the Library is also interested.
Commissioner Zelman suggest including the sides of buildings for art displays such as murals. He stated that the auto parts stores have blank walls down on Blue Hills Road for building art. Commissioner Abdullah stated they should set it up and do it. He requested a list of everyone’s contact information. Commissioner Firger stated he’ll send out a list of contact information.

c. Draft Complete Streets Report and Policy

Mr. Giner informed the EDC that the Consultants in this matter will add another meeting and the Mayor asked that the meeting be scheduled for February 3, 2020. He asked the EDC to create questions to be submitted to him. After which, he will submit them to the Consultants to be answered by the Consultants at the February 3, 2020 meeting. Chair Bercowetz stated she will meet with the mayor concerning this matter. She must find out what role does the EDC play in this Town. She will make a request to have the Consultants come to an EDC meeting to be asked questions by them, so the EDC can receive answers and make an intelligent judgment/opinion concerning this matter. She stated the EDC wants control of their meeting with the Consultants. Commissioner Katrichis agreed with Chair Bercowetz.

Vice Chair Bononi state she and Chair Bercowetz met with Town Manager Smith. They sent an email to Mr. Smith proposing that the EDC be afforded a forty-five (45) minute time slot with the Consultants facilitated by Chair Bercowetz. She didn’t hear back from the email yet. At some point, they were told to address questions in writing and they will receive the answers in writing.

Commissioner Geitz stated he read Decembers EDC Meeting Minutes and he read the Town Managers Memo. He stated he do not understand the politics. He fully agree with Vice Chair Bononi, the Consultants should meet with the EDC and answer their questions.

Commissioner Zelman stated the EDC needs their questions answered to make a decision/opinion.

Commissioner Firger agrees with the discussion. He stated he has been an EDC Commissioner for one (1) year and stated that this has always been an issue. He proposed meeting with the Council to find out what EDC’s function or policy is in this Town. He stated that this was a recurring issue and that we should revisit policy and responsibilities with respect to EDC/Council interactions.

Chair Bercowetz agrees they must figure out what EDC role is in this Town.

Commissioner Abdullah stated the rules are clear concerning the EDC’s responsibility in this Town because he has read them. The EDC is an Advisory Board that gives the pros and cons reports to the Town Council and the Town Council makes the final decision. The Town Council will find out if the EDC’s recommendations are relative or not. They must compare benefits with
loss. Vice Chair Bononi has done an extensive amount of work and her concerns should be sent to the Council.

Chair Bercowetz stated the EDC has questions not reservations, the Consultants has been asked to meet with the EDC to answer these questions in order to get a responsible, intelligent, educated opinion from the Board.

Commissioner Robinson stated an Advisory Board has a responsibility to the Community to make a responsible, intelligent, educated opinion. A meeting between the Consultants and the EDC will answer the EDC questions which would shed light into the situation. She asked, what is the communication from the Council about paying for a meeting with the Consultants for the EDC?

Chair Bercowetz stated she will meet with the Mayor to discuss this matter before the EDC gives a documented opinion. The matter is postponed until next month.

Vice Chair Bononi stated trading information will shed light on the matter which allows EDC to give an opinion. Without the answers from the Consultants to EDC’s questions the EDC will not be responsible and will state why.

The Commission agrees with Vice Chair Bononi. Commissioner Abdullah added, the EDC should let them know they cannot make a responsible, intelligent and educated decision without the information needed to do so. And, at present the EDC does not have the information necessary to give an opinion.

Chair Bercowetz gave the history of how the EDC Board was formed and stated she joined in the 80’s. She stated in those days the EDC was informed as to what was going on in the Town of Bloomfield. Back then if the powers to be in the Town wanted something they would take control. Today, the EDC must create guidelines and send them to the Town Manager.

Mr. David Mann stated this is a multi-level issue, these functions are planning functions. Complete Streets is a policy, just a concept that has not been implemented. The TPZ will have more power to deal with this issue. And Mr. Kevin Gough stated the Council has control but they want EDC’s input concerning Complete Streets. EDC’s input into this matter is needed and wanted.

Chair Bercowetz stated the matter will be postponed and discussed in the February 11, 2020 EDC meeting.

Vice Chair Bononi stated there is a meeting on February 3, 2020. The Commissioners from this board can attend as residents not commissioners and ask questions.

7. New Business:
   a. Presentation regarding possible rezoning of 12 acres of Corporate Crossing property from Professional Office to Planned Luxury Residential.
This matter was taken off the agenda until further notice. The applicants are not ready to move forward on this matter yet.

b. Discussion of Incentives to Attract Restaurant and Retail Uses to the Town Center.

Vice Chair Bononi made a motion to table/continue item 7b until the February 11, 2020 EDC meeting and Commissioner Firger seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to table/continue item 7b until the February 11, 2020 EDC meeting.

c. Discussion re FY 20-21 Budget request.

Mr. Giner discuss this matter briefly stating the budget pays for the recording secretary. The amount of time has increase because of the lengthy meetings. The Event Coordinator needs to be submitted separately with costs. He added, the proposed job description is in and it requires full time status. He will write a budget for the Event Planner and decide where it goes. As per Elizabeth, the Library can share the cost. Ms. Robidoux sent Mr. Giner a detailed PR Coordinator description for the whole Town.

Commissioner Abdullah stated there should be money for Commissioner Firger’s Public Arts project and for staff support. Ms. Robidoux informed him that it could be worked into the PR person as a budget item and has been all worked into the description. Commissioner Firger wants the website maintained and updated.

Chair Bercowetz, Commissioner Firger and Ms. Robidoux will have a meeting concerning this matter and all materials from that meeting will be presented at the EDC February 11, 2020 meeting.

d. Discussion re: Referrals Concerning Matters of Interest to the Board

Vice Chair Bononi has postponed this matter until the February 11, 2020 EDC meeting.

9. Commission Member Updates: None

10. Public Comments:

Mr. Tim Wolfe of Bloomfield stated he has been to three (3) EDC meetings to date. And he is in favor of the Complete Streets, he agrees with Commission Abdullah statement but he has unanswered questions. He finds EDC has been given the elephants tail and he is disappointed that EDC will not be attending the February 3, 2020 meeting with the consultants meeting for the greater good of the Community.

Chair Bercowetz stated she appreciates the comments on the role and methodology of the EDC. The policy is a big one and it must be done correctly with all of the necessary information needed for the EDC to make a sound, responsible, intelligent and educated opinion/decision for the Community.
Commissioner Firger stated he hears Mr. Wolfe’s frustration since he attended three (3) meeting but that Mr. Wolfe knows as much as the EDC knows. EDC does not have approval rights concerning this matter. And EDC is not holding up the decision for this matter.

Vice Chair Bononi added, they appreciate Mr. Wolfe expressing himself at this meeting. In summary, there are important problems with what the Complete Streets documentation says. It must fit the Town of Bloomfield and it does not. EDC must have the answers to their questions to render a responsible opinion.

11. **Staff Reports:**
   a. **Town Project updates**
      
      Mr. Giner included this in the EDC packets which also included the Engineering Construction Projects for December 2019.

   b. **TIF Study Progress**
      
      Mr. Giner gave a brief report on the TIF Study which is ongoing. He stated that the matter is scheduled for the January 22 meeting of the Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee of the Council.

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

13. **Adjournment:**

    Commissioner Firger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

    **NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, February 11, 2019