Chair: Bonnie Bercowetz, Vice Chair Michelle Bononi, Commissioner Nyandah Robinson, Commissioner Jerry Katrichis, Judge Zelman and Commissioner Sidney Abdullah were all present.

Absent: Commissioner Martin Geitz, Commissioner Lenny Hudgen and Commissioner Robert Firger had excused absences.

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, Dr. Don Poland, 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 8:33 a.m.

2. **Roll Call:**
   A Quorum was established with 6 voting members.

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

   The Commission postponed the Consent Agenda until the EDC’s December meeting.

4. **Minutes:**
   a. October 8, 2019

   Commissioner Abdullah made a motion to approve the October 8, 2019 minutes with corrections and Judge Zelman seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the October 8, 2019 minutes with corrections.

5. **Public Comments:**

   Ms. Linda Pagani stated she had comments and questions for the consultants concerning the Draft Complete Streets Report and Policy Program. She asked if the Commission was going to discuss this matter during this meeting or wait until the consultants were present in the meeting. Chair Bercowetz stated there wasn’t a lot to discuss until they have the consultants in the meeting to answer the questions, comments and concerns.
Vice Chair Bononi recommend the matter be opened for any comments they may have to contribute and Chair Bercowetz agreed.

6. **Old Business:**

   a. **EDC Standing Committee on Ordinances:**

Vice Chair Bononi and Dr. Don Poland are in charge of this project. Vice Chair Bononi stated they reviewed individually documentation concerning existing ordinances, consultants, institutional opinions and positions on solar farms and utilities. They exchanged comments about those points and Dr. Poland created a Draft Preliminary Report entitled, “Utility Scale Solar Generation Facilities.” She stated Dr. Poland will give an overview of what they found and what they are looking for concerning this project. This information would be a positive ordinance inclusion since the Town has no language that refers to solar farms in particular.

Chair Bercowetz asked what is the meaning of a utility scale solar energy facilities?

Vice Chair Bononi stated there is some disagreement about that subject. She hopes Dr. Poland would further explain and clear it up in regards to the megawatts generated facilities.

Dr. Poland gave an overview touching on wattage, size, APA (American Planning Administration) documentation, environmental impact, erosion and the Habitat for Humanity.

Dr. Poland also stated that in the context from The State of Connecticut it is essentially that any solar farm providing one (1) megawatt or over is generating off site production. One (1) megawatt from a land development standpoint is probably about two (2) acres of panels which means it is a four (4) to five (5) acres site. And depending on the energy usage one (1) megawatt will power between 200 to 300 sources. He stated they reviewed a lot of documentation concerning this matter such as the PAS memo issued by the American Planning Association on planning and regulatory. The PAS Memo examines utility scale solar facility uses and related land use issues. It defines and classifies these facilities, analyzes their land use impacts and makes recommendations for how to evaluate and mitigate those impacts.

He stated the draft he created is an introduction to land use, policy and zoning policy. He stated there is still a sizable amount of work that needs to be done. They should only be looking at industrial zones or other zones possibly for it. After reading the material from the APA, his biggest concerns are solar farms possible environmental impacts, destruction of habitat through the clearing of forest and farm lands, the erosion impact with the clearing of large sites and the bifurcation of animal habitats.

In that sense when one looks at the land view maps and their POCB it creates the natural diversity data base which is critical to habitat. It can be a vegetative habitat or territories of certain species. Once you look at that mapping it is overlapping with the industrial areas.
In conclusion, Dr. Poland stated they have a good representation on regulatory framework. He also stated he will take a deeper look into finding the best areas and how to approach this project.

Chair Bercowetz asked was there anything in the Regulations to address this matter?

Dr. Poland stated it is a small amount of information nothing in-depth concerning this matter.

Chair Bercowetz asked if Seabury could be used as an example.

Dr. Poland stated the site is not large enough, it’s not selling energy off site and it is considered an accessory use. He will conduct further research and give more thought to formal use. Dr. Poland stated they will reconvene and determine the next step.

Vice Chair Bononi had several questions and issues for Dr. Poland to address as follows: 1) what will the application bring to the Town of Bloomfield. She doesn’t see it bring jobs. 2) what are the alternative energy sources, 3) what are the environmental concerns, 4) how will it affect the storm water system, 5) what are the concerns for grading and regrading, how is the soil affected and can it be use as farm land again, 6) siting, hiding it away in order not to change the character of the land 7) protection of the preservation of wetlands, habitats, post development, construction standards, historical site, burial grounds and designated locations. She stated they must determine if providing a discrete land study or a land use study would be the next step.

Commissioner Katrichis ask why a discrete land use study, why megawatts and not acres?

Dr. Poland explained reiterating his earlier megawattage language and gave an example. He stated to power nine thousand (9,000) homes in Bloomfield with a solar energy farm you would need one hundred and fifty (150) acres of land.

Judge Zelman stated there are a lot of policy issues in creating solar farms.

Vice Chair Bononi stated the next steps would be the land study in order to a) know what you have and b) make suggestions if you want to actively support such an application. By having the information before you one can refine the language and the zoning outline.

In conclusion, Vice Chair Bononi and Dr. Poland will return with additional research concerning this matter the time frame is January.

Vice Chair Bononi made a motion for the EDC to support discussions on renewable and alternative sources of energy. Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously for the EDC to support discussion on renewable and alternative sources of energy.
Vice Chair asked for information concerning the fire damage ordinance and Mr. Giner stated they would have information in the January 2020 meeting.

b. Public Art and Other Initiative to attract visitors:

Commissioner Firger was absent. He is out of the country and he will be returning in December 2020.

c. Discussion re: Draft Complete Streets Report and Policy

Mr. Giner stated, he will have the EDC comments, questions and issues concerning this matter listed by the December EDC meeting to be addressed by the consultants in the January 2020 meeting.

7. New Business:

a. Discussion and Possible Approval of Amended By-laws

Commissioner Abdullah made a motion to approve the Amended By-laws, Commissioner Katrichis seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the By-laws.

b. Discussion on scheduling the Election of Officers

Vice Chair Bononi made a motion to nominate Bonnie Bercowetz as the Chair of the EDC and Commissioner Robinson second the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve Bonnie Bercowetz as Chair of the EDC.

Commissioner Katrichis made a motion to nominate Michelle Bononi as the Vice Chair of the EDC and Commissioner Abdullah second the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to approve Michelle Bononi as Vice Chair of the EDC.

c. Approval of 2020 Commission Schedule

The EDC 2020 meetings are dated as follows: January 7th, February 11th, March 10th, April 14th, May 12th, June 9th, July 14th, August 18th (third Tuesday), September 8th, October 8th changed to October 13th, November 10th and December 8th.

Commissioner Abdullah made a motion to approve the EDC 2020 scheduled meeting dates, Vice Chair Bononi seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the EDC 2020 scheduled meeting dates.

Chair Bercowetz recommend having someone available to replace Mr. Giner in the EDC Meetings while he is on vacation.
9. Commission Member Updates:

Vice Chair Bononi distributed documentation to the EDC concerning matters of interest to the board. It contained her recommendations for the EDC board to consider. She stated presentations should be done addressing matters, projects and proposal for the EDC. The EDC should set policy so that all parties involved know if and when they will be asked to present their proposals to EDC. The idea behind this is to give the EDC an opportunity to comment on projects, proposals and retain a record of those comments project.

Chair Bercowetz stated she was in agreement with Vice Chair Bononi recommendations and it will be on the December Agenda.

Commissioner Robinson stated the Chamber of Commerce received a call from a representative from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. They have an initiative to provide communities with one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00). The money is to be spent in a recipient’s community. They are creating a selective committee to appoint an advisor who will get the funds and distribute the funds to a recipient. Commissioner Robinson asked if anyone on the EDC was interested in being a part of this particular selective committee. Chair Bercowetz stated she would like to be involved. No one else from the EDC was available to participate. Commissioner Robinson will get back to Chair Bercowetz with more details concerning this matter.

10. Public Comments:

Ms. Linda Pagani and Mr. Tim Wolf were present for public comments.

Ms. Pagani stated she agrees with Vice Chair Bononi that the Town of Bloomfield has no guarantee that the solar farms owner will allow the Town to benefit from the renewable energy that their solar farm provides. If they do not sell the renewable energy to the Town and the Town doesn’t benefit other than tax revenues, it will only be an eye sore.

Mr. Kevin Gough spoke about the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. He stated they are in two tiers which includes the Advisor Committee which decides who get the funds. He asked will they fund Public Arts projects in Connecticut.

He also stated the conservation committee should be made aware of the discussion on solar farm regulations. He also stated, the Town put conditions on the Simsbury Solar Farm project.

Mr. Giner stated he will take a look into it.

Mr. Driver stated the Town and State sued to try to stop the Solar Farm but eventually dropped the suit.

Chair Bercowetz recommend Vice Chair Bononi and Dr. Poland take a look at what’s going on in Vermont with their solar farms and renewable energy.

Mr. Wolf stated that the state construction projects give 1% of their funds to Art. He stated Art is an economic driver. And drumming is tied into the history of the Town and it should draw people to Town.

Chair Bercowetz want the Town to be seen as a Green Town.

11. **Staff Reports:**
   a. **Town Project updates**
   Mr. Giner listed the town projects updates in his Town of Bloomfield Monthly Report.
   b. **TIF Study Progress**
   Mr. Goman stated they are waiting for an attorney to be hired. Chair Bercowetz asked what will be the turnaround and Mr. Goman stated right away once an attorney is hired.

12. **EDC Consultant Reports (Goman + York):**
   a. **Additional Reporting and Information**
   Mr. Goman discussed Alexander Manor apartment and long term Airbnb. All other material was included in the staff report to the EDC.

13. **Adjournment:**

   Vice Chair Bononi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Abdullah seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, December 10, 2019**