Minutes not yet approved.
Approval and any edits to be made in succeeding minutes.

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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
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BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE, POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above-mentioned subcommittee held on Monday, October 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in a hybrid meeting format via the Zoom webinar virtual platform. The in-person location was Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee Members present *(In-person):* Mayor Anthony Harrington, Chair & Councilor Joseph Merritt ***via Zoom*:** Councilors' Suzette DeBeatham-Brown & Darrell Goodwin.

Committee Members *(Absent):* Councilor Todd Cooper, Vice-Chair

Also present: *(In-person)*: Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council; Jon Colman, Director Building & Land Use; Warren Plummer, Director of Information, Technology and Innovation ***via Zoom*:** Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr., Town Manager; Glen Garrity, Director of Public Works and Facilities

The meeting began at 6:00 P.M.

OLD BUSINESS

ROCKWELL PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Glen Garrity, Director of Public Works and Facilities, reported that the Rockwell Park project remains on schedule, with Phase 1 construction documents being finalized. Current work includes utility and infrastructure planning, architectural and engineering design for restroom and pavilion facilities, parking improvements, recreation amenities, and coordination of the East Coast Greenway spur trail connecting Tyler to Blue Hills Avenue. Bid documents are expected to be completed later this fall, with the goal of awarding a construction contract before the December 1 DOT winter shutdown. The next project meeting is scheduled for October 15 to review architectural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing drawings.

Mayor Harrington asked about the potential for pursuing additional CIF funding for future phases of the Rockwell Park project. Director Garrity stated that the Town could pursue additional funding opportunities for the project. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown asked about the current funding and estimated total project cost. Director Garrity stated that $4 million in state funding is available for Phase 1 and is expected to cover that phase in its entirety. He stated that future phases are estimated to require an additional $11–$15 million, resulting in an estimated total project cost of approximately $15–$20 million.

Councilor Merritt discussed the potential naming of Rockwell Park in recognition of a former mayor and noted the ongoing Greenway project connecting Tyler Street to the Wintonbury Library. He reported that the project is funded, neighborhood concerns have been addressed, and construction is anticipated to continue into the spring. Councilor Merritt noted that the Greenway will connect recreational facilities, schools, and the library through an east-west bicycle and pedestrian route.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Merritt raised concerns about property tax increases following Bloomfield's recent revaluation, stating that some homeowners have experienced annual increases of up to 12%. He discussed two potential remedies: using state law to reduce residential taxable assessments and reviewing the Board of Assessment Review's authority to address extraordinary assessment increases. Councilor Merritt encouraged the Town Manager to explore both options, emphasizing the need for fairer tax distribution and Board members willing to address significant increases for affected homeowners.

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown and voted unanimously adding an agenda item for the Tax Assessor and Finance Department to review property taxes and explore options for sharing the tax burden more equitably between residential and commercial properties.

There was discussion amongst the councilors regarding this item. It was moved by Councilor DeBeatham-Brown, seconded by Councilor Goodwin and voted unanimously to have the tax assessor and the finance department run the numbers per the request and share with the Councilors this information for the next Governance Subcommittee meeting.

Town Manager Alvin Schwapp Jr. expressed concern that the discussion could imply the Board of Assessment Review was not performing its duties without prior consultation with the Finance Director, Assessor's Office, and legal counsel. He stated that he would convene a meeting with Councilor Merritt, the Finance Committee Chair, the assessors, Town Attorney, and Finance Director to clarify the Board's authority and ensure accurate information is shared publicly.

Councilor Merritt clarified that he was not accusing the Board of failing to perform its duties but believed additional options might be available under state law. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown explained her support for the request, emphasizing that information provided by staff should be shared with the full Council and the public to support fact-based decisions and identify potential tax relief for residents and businesses ahead of the budget season.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE UPDATE ON THE PLAN FOR CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jon Colman, Director Building & Land Use, reported that the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was in its final editing stages, with completion anticipated by the end of the week before release for public comment, review, and referral to the Town Council. The goal was to provide the plan for Council consideration at its second meeting in October. Director

Colman also clarified that the absence of an adopted POCD did not negatively affect the Town Center's CIF grant, noting that the Town had obtained the required waiver and that ECD confirmed the plan's status did not influence its funding decision.

Councilor Merritt asked Director Colman about additional funding sources for the Town Center redevelopment. Director Colman identified the next round of CIF funding as an opportunity for the Town to consider, along with CMDA funding for the selected developer. He also discussed potential municipal financing options, including Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax revenue bonds. Regarding Rockwell Park Phase 2, Director Colman noted that CIF funding could be an option but cautioned that the Town should consider the timing of applications to avoid competing with itself for funding. He also suggested discussing potential legislative changes to expand CMDA funding eligibility to municipalities.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown asked whether developers responding to the Town Center Development Project RFP would finance the project or rely on Town funding. Director Colman explained that developers would finance the private development, while the Town would generally fund public improvements and potentially acquire the necessary properties. He noted that property acquisition did not have to be solely a municipal responsibility and that alternative approaches could be explored with the selected developer.

Mayor Harrington asked whether the Town's lack of a selected developer may have affected its CIF funding consideration and whether a developer would be selected before the next application deadline in December. Director Jon Colman stated that he hoped to select a developer before December and, with assistance from the Town Attorney, establish a developer agreement demonstrating the developer's commitment and access to financing. He noted that having a developer in place would strengthen the Town's CIF application.

DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Director Colman reported progress on the Wedgwood parking solution, Town Center developer selection and CIF funding application, and final edits to the Plan of Conservation and Development. He also provided updates on zoning regulations, housing initiatives, code enforcement, and ongoing residential and commercial developments. In September, the department recorded 189 in-person visits, approximately 1,600 calls, and issued 184 building permits, with permit values exceeding $78 million.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown asked for an update on the proposed development near the ice cream farm and Aldi. Director Colman reported that the only recent inquiries concerned completion of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), with no direct discussions with the developer regarding resubmission or a timeline. He clarified that the project was not contingent on the POCD from the Town's perspective.

Mayor Harrington commented on the progress at Popeyes, noting the consistent construction activity and visible improvements. He expressed enthusiasm about the anticipated repaving of the parking lot, which he felt would improve the surrounding area. Director Colman agreed that the improvements would significantly enhance that part of town.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Town Manager Schwapp Jr. provided updates on the upcoming quarterly Town Hall employee recognition, the October 17 Family Planting Workshop, and the launch of the Blue-Ribbon Committee for budget development. He reported that Winterberry Mall businesses were being connected with grant assistance following the power outage and outlined plans to expand small-business support. He also discussed upcoming Council appointments, future monthly updates on capital improvements, economic development, and finances, and emphasized the need for early budget planning, careful review of potential cuts, and Council guidance on service priorities.

Councilor DeBeatham-Brown asked for clarification on the grant assistance available to Wintonbury Mall businesses, including funding amounts and repayment requirements. Town Manager Alvin Schwapp Jr. explained that the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven would administer the grants through DECD, and that application materials had been shared with businesses. He confirmed the grants do not require repayment and agreed to share the informational slide deck with Council. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown also emphasized the need for Council-wide guidance on the budget process and encouraged gathering input from residents. Town Manager Schwapp Jr., responded that he plans to hold a departmental open house to help Council and the public understand department responsibilities, funding needs, and the potential impacts of budget cuts before providing budget direction.

Town Manager Schwapp Jr., confirmed that Council members could attend the Blue-Ribbon Committee's first meeting, scheduled for Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Councilor DeBeatham-Brown supported the proposed departmental open house and suggested providing a service directory or booklet for residents unable to attend. She also requested that the committee membership be shared publicly. Town Manager Schwapp Jr. explained that the information would be available on the Town's website and confirmed that committee appointments would be finalized the following day, with member biographies provided during Thursday's introduction.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comment

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Goodwin and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of September 15, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Merritt, seconded by Councilor Goodwin and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.