Economic Development Commission

Regular Meeting
August 19, 2026 - 5:30 P.M.
Main Meeting Room, Simsbury Town Hall
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut 06070

MINUTES

Members Present: Charmaine Seavy, Chair; Jeremy Pearlman; Michael Zemel; Leland Holcomb (Virtual)

Others in Attendance: Marc Nelson, Town Manager (Ex-Officio); Ray Lagan, Granby-Simsbury Chamber of Commerce Executive Director/Chamber of Commerce Liaison; Bayard Faithfull, Sustainability Committee Vice Chair & Liaison; Dagny Griswold, Zoning Commission Liaison; Cyn Thomas, Business Development Coordinator/Tourism & Library Liaison

Chair Seavy called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and the Commission sang the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) Membership Discussion was discussed at 5:31 P.M. before all other items. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

The Commission noted recent membership changes and appointments. Introductions were made by new members, Jeremy Pearlman and Michael Zemel, as well as existing Commission representatives. It was mentioned that Vice-Chair Matt Arthur was reappointed to the Commission for another term.

5) Approve the July 15, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes was discussed at 5:38 P.M. following Item 3 and before Items 2, 4, and 6, while waiting for additional participants to arrive for the presentation. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Commissioner Holcomb moved to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Zemel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4) Liaison Updates & Reports began at 5:38 P.M. following Item 5 and before Items 2 and 6. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Chamber of Commerce - Director Lagan reported on Spooktacular, an upcoming event at the Performing Arts Center on October 24, 2026. The event will include live bands, food trucks, children's activities, approximately 65 booths, bounce houses, and other entertainment. The event price has been reduced with assistance from a Town grant. Tickets will be available online and at the door, with children under age 3 admitted free.

Sustainability Committee –Sustainability Committee Vice-Chair Faithfull reported on their clean-energy campaign.

1) The residential campaign seeks to obtain 100 home energy assessments over 12 months.
2) Approximately 46 assessments have been completed during the first two months.
3) Residential assessments cost approximately $40; free for income eligible residents.
4) A separate business energy-assessment program is being developed with Efficient Lighting & Maintenance, Inc. (EL&M). Business assessments will be offered at no cost.
5) The Town is compiling business and commercial landlord addresses for outreach.
6) The committee is continuing to work toward the Town's sustainability goal of obtaining 50% of its electricity generation from clean energy by 2030.
7) Solar installations are planned for Latimer Lane and the high school, with anticipated taxpayer savings discussed during the meeting.
8) The committee is seeking additional commercial rooftops and parking lot locations that could support solar installations. Potential arrangements discussed included power purchase agreements and rooftop leases.
9) The committee is interested in working with the EDC and Chamber to organize a business roundtable in the fall addressing energy efficiency, available programs, and potential solar opportunities.
10) The committee requested assistance identifying appropriate business representatives and determining the best time and format for outreach.

2) "Lights, Camera, Connecticut" Exploring the Economic Impact of Film and TV Production in North Central CT Presentation Overview by East Granby First Selectperson Jason Hayes was discussed at 5:48 P.M. after Items 3, 4a., 4d. and 5. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

First Selectperson Hayes highlighted North Central Connecticut's strategic location and proximity to major cities and Bradley International Airport as a potential advantage for attracting film and television production. He discussed the need for production infrastructure, including sound stages, offices, storage, and related facilities, noting that vacant commercial, warehouse, and office properties could potentially be repurposed. Productions could provide significant economic benefits through local spending, skilled and union jobs, and tourism, while municipalities could retain control over permitting, locations, hours, and production volume.

Hayes also emphasized the importance of long-term certainty for Connecticut's film and television tax credit, which currently requires legislative renewal every two years. He is working with municipalities across the region to build support for strengthening the industry and has begun

touring vacant properties, including plans to visit additional properties in Simsbury. He noted that smaller sound stages and production facilities could be viable alternatives to a large-scale studio complex. An additional regional presentation is planned for October 6, 2026, with industry representatives expected to discuss the infrastructure and policy requirements needed to attract productions to Connecticut.

The Commission discussed potential regional collaboration, vacant commercial space, the economic impact of productions, workforce development, Bradley International Airport, and the importance of balancing economic development with preservation of community character.

6) Chair Report was discussed at 6:38 P.M. before Items 4c., 4e., and 4f. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Chair Seavy discussed moving the September regular meeting due to the Chair's travel schedule.

Commissioner Pearlman moved to schedule a special September meeting on Wednesday, September 30, 2026. Commissioner Zemel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4)c. Town Manager was discussed at 6:40 P.M. after Item 6. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Manager Nelson discussed follow-up work related to the film and television presentation.
The Town is working with our state representative on proposed legislation that could allow municipalities to establish targeted abatements of personal property taxes in connection with redevelopment and the conversion of vacant commercial properties to mixed-use development.
The discussion focused on encouraging development that includes commercial, retail, healthcare, production, or other uses in addition to residential units. The Town is exploring tools that could encourage developers to incorporate these uses into redevelopment projects.

The Town Manager also discussed the potential impact of vacant commercial properties and conversions from commercial to residential use on the grand list and municipal finances. An update was provided on the pending C.G.S. Sec. 8-30g matter. The Town remains cautiously optimistic regarding the outcome.

6) Chair Report was discussed again at 6:48 P.M. before Items 4e. and 4f. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

The Chair also noted that a potential new project concerning a Simsbury-related application or information resource is being explored. Further discussion will take place at the September meeting once the concept has been developed further.

4)f. Zoning Commission was discussed at 6:50 P.M. before Item 4e and after Items 5 and 6. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Liaison Griswold reported that there were no significant August activities. Pending matters include the car wash at Dorset Crossing and the ongoing C.G.S. Sec. 8-30g matter. A zoning amendment was approved concerning the Professional Office Zone definition, allowing 507 Hopmeadow Street to accommodate a medical practice and related complementary uses, including aerial yoga.

4)e. Library & Tourism was discussed at 6:53 P.M. after Items 4f., 5, and 6. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Coordinator Thomas reported that the Simsbury Public Library's website redesign is nearing completion, with a targeted launch in mid-September. Summer Reading Program participation totaled 3,343 participants, including approximately 1,300 adults, 1,800 children, and 230 teens. The Program received support from 31 local business sponsors.

The Business Development Coordinator is also reviewing how tourism is promoted and managed in Town and will explore how the EDC can participate in tourism-related economic development.

3) Membership Discussion was discussed again at 6:55 P.M. after all other items. No motion was made to amend the agenda order; the item was addressed in the sequence in which it was discussed.

Commissioner Thomas stated that she will conduct a review of commissioners' skills and areas of expertise to help identify appropriate project assignments for the EDC. An orientation process for new commission members is being developed. Commissioner Holcumb will receive credentials and training to assist with the Town website.

Main Street Partnership (MSP)
MSP Executive Director Nielsen submitted her report electronically:
The 16th Annual *A Taste in Simsbury Presented by Liberty Bank* is Thursday, August 27. This is a signature event for Simsbury. Tickets can be found at Shopsimsbury.com.

The ribbon cutting for CT Aerial Yoga at 507 Hopmeadow Street is Monday, August 24 at 5:00 P.M. George McGregor, Director of Planning and Community Development, worked with SMSP to get a text amendment to allow CT Aerial Yoga that specific business location.

Office Space Vacancy Committee is going strong. SMSP will present to the Board of Selectmen in September. Thanks to the Town Manager for applying for a Greyfield Remediation Grant for 82 Hopmeadow. Main Street and our state agency wrote letters of support and are working to get it funded by DECD.

SMSP was on the Planning Committee for the 250th Parade which was a hit!

Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned without objection at 6:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Cyn Thomas
Business Development Coordinator