



THE OLD STONE HOUSE

TOWN OF GUILFORD

31 Park Street
GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT 06437

SETTLED IN 1639

Economic Development Commission Annual Report 2014-2015

Stephen Kops, Chair
Ted Sands, Vice Chair
Jennifer Cowie
Pilar Gonzales (resigned Feb 2015)
Matthew Joseff
Mark Wasserman
Robert Cuozzo (moved from alternate to full member Jan 2015)
Mark White (became an alternate member Jan 2015)

Brian McGlone – Economic Development Coordinator, Town Staff Representative
Janet Testa – Shoreline Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Liaison
(resigned Aug 2014). Replaced by Edward Lazarus - Chamber President, Sept
2014.
Kathy DeBurra – Recording Secretary

The Economic Development Commission is charged to conduct research into the economic conditions and trends in the Town and to make recommendations to appropriate Town officials and agencies regarding action to improve the Town's economic condition and development. The Commission may advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts and pamphlets which will further its official purposes.

Annual Report Guilford's Economic Development Commission accomplished the following in 2014-2015:

Several significant projects were approved or began during this period and are now becoming a reality. After nearly two years of renovation, the "former Trailblazer" location at the north end of the Green became the home of Guardian Jet LLC (Q3 2014), H.Pearce Realty, Wm. Pitt Sotheby's Realty (Q4 2014) and

Red Rooster Cookies (Q1 2015). DDR, the owners of the “rock pile” were approved through Planning and Zoning in July 2014, and began construction of Guilford Commons, a shopping plaza that opened during Q4 2015. The former Guilford Suites Motel underwent a major renovation and became a Red Roof Inn+. 66 High Street (former Clinipad site) was purchased with the intention of converting it to an upscale condominium complex consisting of 50+ housing units. Construction is underway with initial units expected by Q3 2016. On the west end of town, a new 12 unit apartment complex was completed and is fully occupied. Holly Hock, a commercial complex in front of the apartments was under construction and began to lease during Q4 2014.

More than 35 businesses started up or expanded during this period. For example, new businesses included, The Spice and Tea Exchange, House of Fashion, Shoreline Children’s Dentistry, Clarity Medical Aesthetics, and JMM Wellness, food service/restaurants like, The Marketplace at the Guilford Food Center, and South Lane Bistro. Existing businesses required new locations to service their operations such as, Village Green Gardens, Character’s and Costumes, Guilford Paint and Decorating, Guilford Sporting Goods, and mediaBOOM. Over a 3 year period, The Safety Zone (former Arkwright facility) consolidated multiple operations from Essex and Clinton, establishing their world headquarters in Guilford (Q4 2014). A new business, Tractor Supply began construction in Q2-2015 and opened on Rt. 1 West in November 2015. Construction is underway for a 5 unit condominium development at Guilford Gatehouse West. These and several other projects will support future economic development.

Interest and activity continues around town. The examples above confirm the desirability of Guilford as a place to live, work, shop and dine.

Administrative, Organizational, & Professional Development

Continued to enhance Town website with featured commercial properties inventory and additional demographic information.

Members attended economic development related seminars. Incorporated subject matter experts into EDC meetings to expand knowledge base of commission members. Industry focus included; hospitality, realtors and retailing.

Events

Utilized the “Nick Fradiani American Idol” experience, including the Guilford Celebration Day (May 1, 2015) as an opportunity to promote Guilford and our local businesses. Over 10,000 people experienced Guilford during the event, with many visiting our local shops, businesses and restaurants that day and after. Collaborated on a 4 hour forum “Enhancing Customer Service” in which 125+ attendees from all facets of our business community learned about growing their businesses by establishing strong customer loyalty based on an overwhelming customer experience.

In collaboration with the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce, participated in numerous New Member “Ribbon Cuttings”, Business-After-Hours Networking, and Tourism initiatives. Supported local events like; Chowder Challenge, Sidewalk Sale Days, and Wellness Event. During Small Business Week, participated in a Roundtable Workshop, which featured our state representatives, hearing first hand from our small businesses about the issues impacting their businesses on a daily basis.
Co-sponsored SCORE workshops with the Chamber and Guilford Savings Bank.

Community Outreach

Utilized Guilford’s 375th Anniversary Celebration to support businesses and stimulate our local economy.(Full year 2014 initiative).
Expanded scope of information and ease of use of website for residents and prospective businesses.
Continued to inform public on EDC initiatives via, press releases, E-newsletter, website-Facebook, Guilford Events magazine and the Police Department, “Coffee with a Cop” initiative.
Cooperated with the Guilford Preservation Alliance by supporting their Walking Tours and Tourism programs, including the development of the Information Kiosk located near the Community Center.

Regional Outreach

Guilford continued as an active member of REX including the development of the 5 year region strategic plan.
Continued dialogue with Branford and Madison EDCs, established relationships with numerous neighboring EDC’s and local and state officials.

Interaction with Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments

EDC participated on the Steering Committee for major update of 2002 Plan of Conservation & Development. The updated plan was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in March 2015.
EDC participated on Planning Committee of Planning and Zoning Commission. The major project focus included, the Rt. 1 West Study Committee.
EDC proposed revisions to Zoning Regulation 273-47, allowing merchants additional time for the use of outdoor displays to promote their respective businesses. This was approved by Planning and Zoning on a 1 year trial basis, expiring at the end of December 2015. Assuming all goes well, the EDC will seek a continuation and or additional enhancements to the regulation.
Expanded relationships with other boards, commissions and community groups.
Increased coordination with Town Hall South.

Submitted by Stephen Kops and Brian McGlone May 3, 2016