

WCEDD Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2022 – Web Conference

Members in attendance

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| - Rudy Marconi, Chair | Town of Ridgefield |
| - Lynn Vanderslice, Vice Chair | Town of Wilton |
| - Hal Kurfehs | Coldwell Banker Commercial |
| - Andrea Rynn | Western CT Health Network |
| - David Souder | Stamford UConn |
| - Jennie Ripps | The Owl's Brew |
| - Jessica Vonashek | City of Norwalk |
| - Marie Allen | SWCT Agency on Aging |
| - Jason Patlis | Norwalk Aquarium |

Francis Pickering, Mike Towle, and Betsy Paynter were in attendance with WestCOG.

Meeting Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 1:04

Public Participation

No Public participation.

- January WCEDD meeting minutes were approved by Lynne Vanderslice and second by Andrea Rynn, all in favor.
- Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) update was provided by Besty Paynter. She mentioned they have joined the Fintech/Technology RSP group, the Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare RSPs are just getting started. The CEDS process is ahead of their schedule.
- Betsy presented the SWOT analysis to the groups from the feedback received during the various focus groups. Goes through each focus group and collects comments.

Business Climate

- Hal suggested a decision tree site search tool.

Workforce/Education Opportunities

- Lynne was concerned about Transit Oriented Development might be too narrow.
- Jason with Norwalk Aquarium wants to see partnerships with education programs. Norwalk aquarium is doing this and thinks its working well. Can this be expanded? The Aquarium has formal programs, been going well.

Education

- Hal discusses that career academy is underway in Danbury, might be something to be followed and evaluated within the region re: workforce development

Image and Visibility

- Jennie noticing threats about young people and transportation access with running her business is Stamford
- WestCOG will share the CEDS Goals and SWOT with the group. Monthly CEDS Working Committee meeting will take place the first Thursday of May, June, July and August. All are invited to attend working meetings. Encourage to review the attached documents.
- Rudy asked about the 50k spend of ARPA funds to be used for Broadband Study.
- WestCOG to share the scope of work for the Broadband project.

Aquarium Application Updates

- Approved at one level to move to the next level. Strong start. No formal approval yet from the EDA.

IIJA Update.

- Funding comes through the COGs soliciting projects through selectmen and mayors.

Healthcare

- Rudy states the ever-increasing cost of healthcare. Are there solutions to deliver health care insurance to businesses and municipalities to see how to curb these costs? Putting a financial strain on families.
- Direct contracting and shared risk programs might be possible solutions.
- Andrea is working with state to collect in patient health which would help add in-patient beds in the region. Nuvance is adding children and adolescence services.
- Andrea, updating their economic impact report for Nuvance health by hospital. Might be useful to build into the CEDS. Happy to see this CEDS move so quickly.

CEDS Working Committee

Betsy explained there will be monthly Working CEDS Committee meeting for May, June, July, and August.

Hal made a motion to adjourn, Lynne second, all in favor. Meeting ended at 1:48pm.