



EDC Monthly Meeting (recurring invite) - April 09, 2026

EDC Minutes

Attendees: Jennifer Almquist, Brett Robbins (Chair), Elizabeth Borden, Cheryl Heller, Sue Frisch, Thomas McGowan, Jon Riedeman, Robert Whipple

Brett called the meeting to order at 5:07.

Meeting Purpose

To align on EDC strategy, plan business support initiatives, and review funding requests.

Key Takeaways

- **In-Person Meetings:** The EDC will meet in-person at The Hub starting May 14 to improve discussion dynamics, using its hybrid A/V setup for remote attendees.
- **Business Workshops:** To honor survey respondents, the EDC will launch a workshop series on topics like marketing. A paid assistant will build a complete business email list for promotion.
- **Artisan Show Funding:** Jon Riedeman requested funding to expand the Norfolk Artisan Friends show. The EDC approved the concept, pending a formal budget for reimbursement at the May meeting.
- **Main Street Initiative:** The EDC will be the town's point person for the CT Main Street Center's \$25k grant-funded guidance program to revitalize the town's Main Street.

Topics

Meeting Logistics

- **Problem:** Recurring Zoom link confusion from mismatched calendar and invitation links.
- **Solution:** Brett will delete and resend the recurring invite with a single, correct link.
- **Decision:** Meet in-person at The Hub starting May 14.
 - **Rationale:** Improve discussion dynamics.
 - **Venue:** The Hub has a hybrid A/V setup; Town Hall is unavailable due to scheduling conflicts.
 - **Logistics:** Cheryl and Jennifer will provide transport for Sue. Libby will confirm A/V functionality.

EDC Membership

- Two open spots remain on the 7-member, 3-alternate board.
- **Candidate:** Peter Aziz was suggested by Cheryl.
 - **Action:** Brett to meet with Aziz to assess fit.
- **Recruitment Focus:** Candidates with skills in marketing, branding, or technology are preferred, aligning with business needs identified in the recent survey.

Business Support Workshops

- **Context:** A recent survey (22 respondents) showed strong interest in business support, particularly in marketing and branding.
- **Decision:** Launch a workshop series to honor respondent feedback and deliver on the EDC's promise.
- **Format:** A "curriculum" of interactive workshops, not just lectures, to help businesses solve real-world problems.
- **Promotion:** A complete business email list is required for effective outreach.
 - **Challenge:** The current list is incomplete and previous volunteer efforts failed.
 - **Solution:** Hire a paid assistant (\$20/hr) to build the list by Googling and calling businesses.
 - **Action:** Brett to check with a college student; Libby to check with Hub staff.

Norfolk Artists and Friends

- **Request:** Jon Riedeman requested funding to revitalize the annual artist show.
- **Plan:** Invite ~12 artists from New Marlborough to boost energy and draw a new audience.
- **Funding Need:** Advertising budget for publications like *The Artful Mind* (\$300) and *Litchfield Magazine* (\$1,000).
- **Feedback:**
 - **Poster:** The "Norfolk vs. New Marlborough" poster concept was deemed attention-grabbing but risks reinforcing an "elitist" perception.
 - **Resources:** Robert offered to share ad placement data. Jennifer suggested the NW CT Arts Council and Civic Lift as promotional tools.
 - **Revenue:** Robert will end the legacy 25% EDC commission on show sales to support the organization's growth.

CT Main Street Center Partnership

- **Opportunity:** The First Selectman asked the EDC to be the town's point person for a CT Main Street Center initiative.
- **Program:** The Center received a \$25k grant from the NW Hills COG to provide revitalization guidance to NW Corner towns.
- **Action:** Libby will lead the EDC's engagement, inviting the First Selectman to join the initial meeting.

Next Steps

- **Brett:**
 - Resend recurring Zoom invite with a single, correct link.
 - Meet with Peter Aziz to assess EDC fit.
 - Check with a college student about the paid assistant role.
- **Libby:**
 - Confirm A/V setup at The Hub for the May 14 meeting.
 - Check with Hub staff about the paid assistant role.
 - Ask the First Selectman to join the CT Main Street Center meeting.
 - Send the CT Main Street Center info packet to the committee.
- **Cheryl:**
 - Create a shared doc for workshop topics and potential speakers.
- **Jon:**
 - Prepare a formal budget for the artisan show for the May meeting.

- **Robert:**
 - Share ad placement resources with Jon.
 - End the 25% EDC commission on artisan show sales.
- **Jennifer:**
 - Share info on the NW CT Arts Council and Civic Lift with Jon.

Submitted

Elizabeth Borden