



## Barnstable County Economic Development Council (BCEDC)

### Draft Minutes | October 11, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

Virtual via Zoom

The meeting was held virtually with members of the Barnstable County Economic Development Council participating remotely, pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

The Vice-Chair announced that because the meeting was being held virtually all votes and other actions would be done by roll call. He stated that the members participating remotely would be announced as roll call is taken.

### Attendance/Roll Call

<b>Member</b>	<b>Business Sector</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Greg Bilezikian	Real Estate Development	Absent
Rob Brennan	Construction/Engineering	Present
Amanda Converse	Retail Commerce	Present
Kara Galvin	Workforce Development	Present
Lisa Guyon	Social Services	Present
Cindy Horgan	Childcare	Present
Tammi Jacobsen	Higher Education	Present
Alisa Magnotta	Social Services	Absent
Jack Stevenson	Construction	Absent
Robert Talerman	Banking/Finance	Present
Julie Wake	Arts and Culture	Present
<i>Non-voting members</i>		
Mark Forest	BC Commissioner	Absent
Harold Mitchell	CCC Rep	Absent
John Ohman	Assembly of Delegates	Absent
<b>Cape Cod Commission Staff:</b>		
Chloe Shaefer	Chief Planner	
Steve Tupper	Deputy Director	
Cory Murray	Community Dev. Planner	
Helaine Goudreau	Special Projects Coord.	
Carolina Robayo	Economist	
David Still	Digital Comm. Specialist	
Siobhan Cavacco	Administrative Assistant	

## Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm with roll call.

## Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion by Tammi Jacobsen, seconded by Cindy Horgan, the draft minutes from the September 13, 2023 BCEDC meeting were approved with a roll call vote.

## Roll Call Vote

Rob Brennan	Yes
Amanda Converse	Yes
Kara Galvin	Abstain
Lisa Guyon	Abstain
Cindy Horgan	Yes
Tammi Jacobsen	Yes
Bert Talerman	Yes
Julie Wake	Yes

## Agenda Item

Steven Tupper, Deputy Director at the Cape Cod Commission, discussed efforts to ensure reliable, affordable, and equitable access to the internet for residents and visitors of Cape Cod, including conducting a regional broadband needs assessment, identifying municipal digital equity planning services, and the coordination with the statewide digital equity planning process.

Mr. Tupper said digital equity means everyone has affordable, fast, reliable internet connectivity with adequate and affordable devices and the skills to use the technology. He said connectivity inequality became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and now there is a focus on populations and underrepresented communities that face digital equity challenges.

Mr. Tupper reviewed the federally funded statewide digital equity plan, which offers local and regional funding opportunities through the [Massachusetts Broadband Institute](#) (MBI). He said MBI outreach coordination includes the [Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Survey](#). Mr. Tupper said the CCC is helping with outreach to municipalities to encourage participation in digital equity planning and promoting MBI's digital equity survey. He said the survey will impact where funding is distributed and so far the highest response rate has been from Cape Cod. Mr. Tupper said they are using paper surveys to reach out to underrepresented communities, particularly those with internet connectivity issues.

Mr. Tupper said the state has provided listening sessions to inform communities of the broadband and digital equity strategic plans. He said the CCC supported MBI with a listening session in Barnstable with remote locations in Bourne and on Martha's Vineyard. He said through MBI, towns can have a digital equity plan developed at no cost. He said the CCC is a pre-qualified planning services provider for the fifteen towns in Barnstable County and they are currently working with



Bourne and Sandwich and will be working with Orleans soon. Mr. Tupper briefly reviewed the data they have collected in Bourne, including provider information and internet speed by different areas in the town. He said data indicates some areas are paying for broadband but not receiving adequate internet speed services. Mr. Tupper said they are also looking at existing plans, like the Affordable Connectivity Program, that have enrollment processes that may discourage qualified households from signing up.

Mr. Tupper said CCC staff has been conducting asset mapping to reach out to groups, organizations, and individuals that are working in this area, such as libraries, councils on aging, educators, and nonprofits. He said to date they have identified around eighty digital equity assets across Cape Cod.

Mr. Tupper said Barnstable County is funding a regional broadband needs assessment through American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds. He said they are doing an objective data collection and assessment on fixed and mobile broadband to quantify anecdotal accounts of connectivity issues. He said they will be looking at affordability and digital equity and providing recommendations for improving the network.

Mr. Tupper said the CCC is working with CTC Technology & Energy (CTC) on the needs assessment and they hope to have recommendations available by mid-2024. He said so far they have reviewed existing conditions, conducted a phone survey with over seven-hundred participants to understand what people are experiencing, and continuing to conduct speed testing and monitoring. Mr. Tupper said preliminary data showed indications of download speeds in Barnstable County as much as sixty percent lower in the summer than off-season. He said the next step is meeting with providers and focus groups with key populations. Mr. Tupper said one of the key groups is a business focus group and said anyone interested in participating can reach out to CCC staff or to him directly at [stupper@capecodcommission.org](mailto:stupper@capecodcommission.org).

Lisa Guyon asked how the phone survey was conducted. Mr. Tupper said they contacted mobile phone and landlines on Cape Cod with an oversample on the Outer Cape due to difficulty getting enough responses. He said they tried to sample across a broad range of demographics.

Bert Talerman asked about internet speed rates during the summer and how to rank communities with less people but more connectivity issues compared to the larger communities. Mr. Tupper said the federal government data sets do not rank with those considerations. He said from a business standpoint for providers, investing in upgrades to seasonal communities is not cost effective compared to communities with a year-round customer base. However, Mr. Tupper said it is important for seasonal residents to have good access for many reasons, including safety. He said advocating for equity is important, especially for populations who traditionally do not have a voice in these conversations.

There were no additional questions or comments.

## Member Reports

Amanda Converse provided an update for Love, Live, Local. Ms. Converse said Love, Live, Local and Amplify POC co-hosted a small business community dialogue with the Cape delegation and twenty-five local business owners where they presented data on the local return on every dollar spent and the racial wealth gap in Massachusetts. She said business owners were provided the opportunity to share their experiences and challenges. She said their current challenges are housing for employees, increases in insurance and credit card fees, hoops to jump through with towns, access to capital, and technical assistance. Ms. Converse said most of the businesses said the summer season felt like pre-COVID in terms of numbers but the rainy weather was good for retailers so many had a good season and are feeling positive about the fall season.

Kara Galvin provided an update for MassHire. Ms. Galvin said Mass Stem Week starts next Monday with a robotics event for educators and students. She said there will also be a residential construction career day next Thursday with the Homebuilders Association at the fairgrounds. She said it has become a very popular event and they expect about three hundred attendees. Ms. Galvin said they were recently awarded a \$260,000 offshore wind grant to work with vocational schools to raise awareness of the sector. She said they are applying for another offshore wind grant to work with comprehensive schools and their underrepresented populations. Ms. Galvin said this is their twenty-seventh year of Artworks, and they are seeking extra funding as the program has expanded into middle schools. She said they held two art camps during the school year and ran a camp in the summer. Ms. Galvin said they are working with Senator Cyr and Cape Cod Community College on a three-year healthcare grant.

Lisa Guyon provided an update for WeCan. Ms. Guyon said they recently received a three-year \$150,000 grant from the Women's Foundation of Boston. She said they were eligible for the grant after opening the Hyannis office because Barnstable is a gateway city. She said they are the first grantee on Cape Cod. Ms. Guyon said things are going well and they are seeing a more diverse community of women seeking services with the new mid-Cape office.

Cindy Horgan provided an update for early childhood education. Ms. Horgan said the Common Start initiative will be at the State House on October 17th. She said there is an active movement to engage women and families would like to open a home center and the Cape Cod Chamber has \$5,000 grants to support the movement. Ms. Horgan said they are continuing to move forward with ARPA projects.

Tammi Jacobsen provided an update for Cape Cod Community College. Ms. Jacobsen said they received supplemental funding for an education training program that started in September. She said the extra funding allowed them to increase cohorts with a few non-credit programs. Ms. Jacobsen said they are launching a community health worker program with Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Continuing Education Credits (CECs) for health and human services professionals.

Ms. Jacobsen said her department has two positions posted online, a part-time remote position working with healthcare outreach & coordination and a full-time administrative assistant position.

Rob Brennan provided a Climate Innovation Center update. Mr. Brennan said they are continuing with the roll out of the center and the second board meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. He reminded council members that the goal of the center is to attract innovators to the Cape to deliver NetZero affordable housing to the region. Mr. Brennan said they toured the Wilkens Center at Cape Cod Community College and the robotics, 3D printing, lab space, and auditorium space will be helpful resources for the center. He said exploring locations for the innovation center is on the agenda for tomorrow's board meeting.

Julie Wake provided an update for the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod. Ms. Wake said they had 150 attendees at the Creative Exchange conference. She said their Capacity-Building grant is open online and fifteen artists will be selected for the second cohort. She said the first cohort had twelve artists and eleven finished. Ms. Wake said two weeks ago she testified at the State House for public art and the preservation of art spaces. She said they are working with the CCC on asset mapping for private and public spaces for artists. Ms. Wake said they are also working with the Town of Barnstable for a possible public art project.

Bert Talerman provided a finance update. Mr. Talerman commented on the summer season and said the rainy weather helped some sectors, while hurting others. He said he personally experienced Bourne bridge maintenance traffic last weekend and said temporary closure of the bridges for complete renovation will be an economic disaster for the region.

## **New Business**

There was no new business.

## **Adjourn**

Upon a motion by Tammi Jacobsen, seconded by Rob Brennan, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm with a roll call vote.

## **Roll Call Vote**

Rob Brennan	Yes
Amanda Converse	Yes
Kara Galvin	Yes
Lisa Guyon	Yes
Cindy Horgan	Yes
Tammi Jacobsen	Yes
Bert Talerman	Yes
Julie Wake	Yes



## List of Materials Used/Presented

- Broadband Presentation
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