



Economic Development FAQ:

Who is the Economic Development Director?

The Economic Development Director (EDD) works to enhance and support Waterbury's economy in several ways. The EDD works throughout Waterbury to recruit and retain businesses. The EDD provides resources including a list of available properties, funding source information, municipal process and regulatory information, connections with other entities within Waterbury, and more to make doing business in Waterbury easier. The EDD also communicates with regional and state entities to work towards common economic development goals.

Zoe Gordon is the current EDD in Waterbury. In her work, Zoe is passionate about economic development being carried out with community development principles in mind. She has a strong commitment to public engagement and if she does not have the opportunity to involve the community in her day-to-day work, she is always more than happy to provide any information possible. Zoe welcomes feedback and encourages one-on-one conversations with anyone interested in economic development or a particular project. If you have an idea for what you'd like to see in Waterbury, please call Zoe, she would really love to hear it! Zoe feels that gaining community feedback is the only way to make sure the economic goals of Waterbury are met.

What is the Waterbury Area Development Committee (WADC)?

The WADC is a committee of Revitalizing Waterbury that oversees and guides the work of the EDD. Local business owner Jeffrey Larkin (owner of Arvads Grill), to whom the EDD directly reports, chairs the WADC. Additionally, the WADC is comprised of a group of local business owners and professionals, including Cindy Lyons of New England Landmark Realty, Mark Frier of the Reservoir, Charles Grenier of Grenier Engineering, Stephen Van Esen of Pilgrim Partnership, Ed Rooney of Edgeworks Creative, Jenn Kimmich of The Alchemist, Megan Cicio of Northfield Savings Bank, Melissa Gorham of Keurig Green Mountain, and Paul Reed of Walker Construction. Municipal Manager William Shepeluk also attends WADC meetings whenever possible.

There are many overlaps between the WADC, RW and the municipality, which help create strong continuity, communication and accountability. Paul Reed is the Revitalizing Waterbury Board President, and Jeffrey Larkin and Cindy Lyons are members of the RW Board of Directors. The EDD attends RW Board meetings and provides updates on her work. Mark Frier is also a Waterbury Selectboard member and provides another connection to the municipality. The EDD attends any Select Board, Village Trustee, or any other municipality-led meeting appropriate to report or comment on projects and issues in Waterbury. Finally, the EDD reports on a weekly basis to the Municipal Manager, WADC, Selectboard and Trustees.

Why is the WADC part of RW?

When the EDD position was vacant for a time, the municipality had an opportunity to reflect on how the EDD position fit within the municipality and determined that RW would be a more appropriate entity to oversee the position for the following reasons:

- Revitalizing Waterbury's mission is to maintain and enhance the historic, social and economic vitality of Waterbury. Economic development clearly falls under this mission.
- As Waterbury grows, the municipality has more positions and departments to oversee. Economic development was competing for the attention of municipal staff. RW has the capacity to appropriately oversee economic development and implement strong accountability measures.
- The EDD needs to maintain confidentiality with projects, which is allowed under the nonprofit structure. If the EDD were a municipal employee, all of the EDD's work would technically be public information making it virtually impossible for projects to remain confidential.

If the WADC is part of RW, isn't RW the same as the WADC?

While this question is certainly a reasonable one, the answer is no. A good analogy is the square and rectangle: a square is a rectangle but a rectangle is not a square. The WADC is part of RW, but RW is much larger than the WADC. RW is Waterbury's Designated Downtown organization and has 5 committees that carry out specific tasks:

- Marketing and Promotions (M&P): Through events, marketing and promotional campaign, this committee works to promote the downtown as the center of commerce, culture, and community life for residents and visitors alike. This committee is responsible for the Wrap It Up & Win promotion and the Waterbury Arts Fest.

- **Economic Development:** This committee works to strengthen existing businesses by hosting seasonal business mixers, forming strong personal relationships with business owners, and helps maintain strong communication in the Waterbury business community.
- **Design:** This committee plays a key role in shaping the physical image of Main Street as a place attractive to shoppers, investors, business owners and visitors. Examples of the committees work can be seen in the new banners at the roundabout and the seasonal flower barrels dispersed around Waterbury.
- **Organization:** Plays a key role in keeping the board, committees, staff, and projects and programs in good shape by attracting people and resources to the organization.
- **Waterbury Area Development Committee:** The WADC works with and oversees the EDD. They also vet potential projects, provide resources for the EDD and clients, and carry out economic development strategic planning.

The WADC has a unique autonomy under this committee structure where if they make a decision or take a stance on a particular issue, that position does not directly reflect the views and values of RW as an entire organization. There is overlap between the WADC, the RW Board, and the municipality meaning that no decision is made in a vacuum. However, there will be times that the entities clash, which is a natural progression that comes with economic development.

Why does the EDD have to keep some projects confidential?

To put it simply, starting a business can be like having a baby: it's something you can be very excited about and want to share with the world, but not too early in the process just in case things change. Many business owners who are making a big investment, like buying a property, renting a space, or starting a new business, are mindful of the complexities that come along with these steps, and don't want to get too many people involved too early. This can be for a wide variety of reasons such as:

- A business may be leaving their current rental space and haven't yet told their landlord.
- A developer could be buying a new property. Real estate can change quickly and many things can happen during the purchasing process that may cause the situation to change.
- A business's employees might not yet be aware of the change and business owners need to work through the details before employees can be brought into the conversation.
- There may be competing businesses that could challenge or ruin plans.
- A business may be struggling to make ends meet, but do not want that information to be public knowledge.

Current Economic Development Director Bio:

Zoe Gordon is Waterbury's current Economic Development Director. Zoe grew up in the small town of Glen Ridge, New Jersey. She moved to Vermont almost 5 years ago to attend UVM and study Community and International Development and Economics. She currently lives in Burlington with her boyfriend and 2 Newfoundland dogs. Zoe loves to be active, whether that is dancing, spinning, hiking, or just going for a long walk on a nice day. Zoe is also a big foodie and craft beer fan and loves to travel the state to try new breweries and eateries! This is just one reason Zoe LOVES Waterbury-recreation, food, beer, and a great community-what more could you want in a place?!