



May 13, 2017

“The Town of Clinton’s Economic Development Commission shall conduct research into the economic conditions and trends in the Town and make recommendations to appropriate officials and agencies of the Town regarding actions to improve the Town's economic condition”

EDC Mission Statement

To: Clinton Board of Selectmen, Clinton Board of Finance, Clinton Planning & Zoning Commission, Clinton Historic District Commission, Clinton Water Pollution Control Commission, Clinton Police Commission, Clinton Board of Education, Conservation Committee, Public Works Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Energy Committee, Municipal Building Committee

Over the last two years, the Clinton EDC has met with executives of many towns in Connecticut; towns that we compete with for residents, businesses, developers, grants etc. The overriding takeaway is that we need to not just improve our effectiveness in economic development but, government administration overall.

Clinton is at a defining moment in its history. We face major decisions on many issues that will have long-term impacts on our Town, not just for economic development but, in issues such as a declining and aging population, maintaining quality education without the need for tax increases, long-term waste water treatment, historic preservation of our town’s assets, affordable housing and coastal resiliency, etc. Properly addressing these issues requires retaining the best talent and resources working within the most efficient governing system possible.

Input the EDC has received has identified Clinton’s overall needs: professionally-led and sustained economic development effort, professional town planner, better communication across departments, (i.e., departments operating independently in “silos”), better accountability, i.e., “who’s responsible for this?” greater transparency and less party partisanship. These issues are not easily solved. Clinton would benefit by hiring a properly-vetted person with the actual training and job experience to know what to do and how to do it.

Clinton recruits, interviews and extensively vets the folks who manage our great Police Department and School System; selecting only professional, experienced people who have the skills to effectively manage and lead. We hire the best and they are accountable to the Town to perform. Yet, as regards the Town's Chief Executive, the status quo is that the town's two main political committees select very well-meaning and civic-minded candidates. One is elected and, in effect, becomes the Town's "CEO". It is unreasonable and unfair to expect that any elected First Selectman, no matter how well-intentioned,--without a strong background in town government, with strong pre-existing relationships with Hartford, Federal agencies, other towns, consultants, developers, Civic Associations, etc. —can as effectively and efficiently manage Clinton compared with a Town that is managed by a person who does. We should have a Town Manager, aided by a full-time Town Planner, responsible for the daily management of the Town, executing the plans and objectives set by our elected officials and fully accountable to Clinton and its residents.

The Town Manager form of government as crafted by the Charter Review Commission will provide an extremely critical resource: a professional executive who will have the training, experience and relationships that are increasingly critical to our town's near and long-term success.

We acknowledge that changing our form of town government will take dedication, hard work time and patience from many quarters. However, it is crucial that we now begin this transition. The Clinton EDC unanimously supports the Charter Review Commission's recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,



John V. Allen

Chairman, Clinton Economic Development Commission