

# Hamden Regional Chamber of Commerce 2023 Legislative Agenda

Created by the Chamber's Governmental Affairs Committee, and approved by the Hamden Regional Chamber Board of Directors

Your Chamber of Commerce has worked for the past year with Town government to address the issues that matter most to local businesses, and we can see significant progress in a number of areas. Thanks to funds from the State, the Margaret L. Keefe Center will be upgraded, something long overdue. Hamden's Fire Station 2 – the location where the Hamden Chamber of Commerce was founded nearly 100 years ago – will also benefit from State funds to modernize the facility. Laurel View Country Club's banquet hall is being renovated, and the golf course has improved immensely. But there is still much that needs to be done:

## State Policy

- It is time for the State and the Town to resolve the matter of "The Tire Pond," the three lots at 2895 State Street. We believe that this land can become tax and job producing property again. The Town is owed over one million dollars in taxes and fines and we can help the Town develop a strategy to acquire these funds. The "Tire Pond" also provides the Town with its only access to the Quinnipiac River. It is therefore

potentially a significant resource to the Town.

- We are pleased with the plans to expand and improve Tweed New Haven Airport; New Haven County needs a first-class facility.
- The Chamber opposes any State action that would impose arbitrary, universal limits on rent increases for residential properties.

## Town Policy

- Hamden's financial health remains a major concern to local businesses. This serves to discourage businesses from expanding in or moving to Hamden.
- The Chamber has adopted a slogan, "Support Local Always." The Town needs to adopt that as well, and attempt, whenever possible, to use local businesses for Town purchases.
- The Chamber has been a partner in economic development in Hamden for its entire history. The Town's most recent economic development plan expired on December 31, 2021. We support the development of a new long-range economic development plan

that reflects the current needs of the community, and assists in the growth and retention of Hamden's business community. The Chamber is ready to partner with the Town in the development of a plan.

- The Chamber supports the extension of sewers to the north on Whitney Avenue to grow the tax base and to create opportunities for small business growth.
- The Town must develop a plan for high-speed internet access for all residents to meet the demands for a 21st century economy.
- The Town should develop partnerships with business, area institutions and the public school system to prepare our young people for the job market across all economic sectors in Hamden.
- We support the new administration's plans to review and update the Town's zoning regulations to reflect the goals stated in the Plan of Conservation and Development and to create a more equitable economy. We believe that the business community needs to be engaged in the process of these revisions.

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- Crime remains a major concern for Hamden businesses. Those crimes can discourage in-store shopping, further hurting Hamden's small businesses, and discourage businesses from considering moving to Hamden. The Town should consult with the business community to develop a proactive approach to solve these problems.
- Hamden needs to be known as the Town that helps businesses to grow and to thrive, a town that is welcoming. Progress has been made, but more needs to be done to assist businesses trying to open or expand. Frequently businesses confront an inconsistent application of the rules and regulations in Planning and Zoning, Engineering and the Building Department, that can at times seem confusing and insurmountable, while costing businesses time and money.
- The Olin Powder Farm is a 100+ acre property between Dixwell Avenue and Leeder Hill Drive; it should be a major asset to the Town; the property's future needs to be resolved, so that this resource is available to all residents.
- The timely development of the High Meadow property needs to be appropriate to the neighborhood, and in the best interests of the Town. We concur with the analysis that this property is best developed for senior housing and/or health care. Regular updates on the status of this development should be provided.
- Commit the Town to work with CT Transit to develop a reconfigured map of the New Haven area bus routes, to include additional east-west routes as well as New Haven-centered routes.
- Work with Quinnipiac University and neighborhood groups, to create a working plan to promote the development of Whitney Avenue from Ives Street to Mt. Carmel Avenue.
- Develop a stake-holder working group to promote the development of Key Development Nodes as identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) including Dixwell Avenue, from the New Haven line to the Wilbur Cross Parkway as well as the State St. and Whitney Avenue corridors.
- The Town needs to be open to cannabis retail establishments. Concerns about safety and security are well-founded, based on experiences in some other states, but the Chamber believes that these concerns can be addressed with proper regulation and requirements.