



Public Notice of the Village of Cambridge, pursuant to Section 19.84, Wisconsin Statutes, is hereby given to the public and to the news media, that the following meeting will be held:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026

TIME: 4:30 PM

LOCATION: AMUNDSON COMMUNITY CENTER
200 SPRING ST.
CAMBRIDGE, WI 53523

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL**
3. **PROOF OF POSTING**
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES PER PERSON)**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 7, 2026**
6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS – NO ACTION REQUIRED**
 - a. Goal-setting discussion regarding SMART Goals
7. **NEW BUSINESS – ACTION REQUIRED: NONE**
8. **QUESTIONS, STAFF REFERRALS, AND FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**
9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Posted: July 31, 2026

NOTE:

Individuals who need special accommodations are encouraged to call (608) 423-3712 at least 24 hours before the meeting. A quorum of the Village Board may be present to gather information related to their duties as Village Trustees; however, no official business will be conducted, and no action will be taken by the Board at this meeting. For more detailed information about agenda items, please contact (608-423-3712.



MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

AMUNDSON COMMUNITY CENTER
200 SPRING ST., CAMBRIDGE, WI 53523
TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2026, 4:30 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Trustee Busch called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Members Present – Trustee Betsy Busch, Nadine Breunig, Scott Filter, Matt McFalls, and Kayla Papenfuss. Members Absent – None.

Others Present – Chris Krueger, Nathaniel Timmermann, and Village Clerk/Treasurer Brian Wilson.
3. **PROOF OF POSTING:** Confirmed - upper and lower levels of the Amundson Center, Cambridge Post Office, Badger Bank, Bank First, and the Village website.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (LIMIT OF 3 MINUTES PER PERSON):**

Chris Kruger, Cambridge resident and former EDC member, noted the room tax ordinance was designed to fund tourism via nonprofit entities and to apply to hotels, Airbnbs, VRBOs, and short-term rentals. He explained that, by ordinance and state law, 70% of revenue must go to tourism promotion managed by a nonprofit; 30% remains with the village, with EDC recommending uses, subject to board approval. He suggested past committee members prepare a refresher summary for the Village Board on ordinance intent and history.
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** December 1, 2025, and June 2, 2026

Motion by K. Papenfuss to approve the minutes of December 1, 2025, and June 2, 2026. Second by Scott Filter.
Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS – NO ACTION REQUIRED:**
 - a. Room tax update
 - Room Tax Revenue Calculation and Status
 - Three local inns/hotels provided room counts, occupancy percentage, and average nightly rates for estimating revenue.
 - Tax rate confirmed at 5%. A prior 4% calculation yielded \$9,600; previous estimates ranged \$10,000–\$12,000.
 - Methodology using room nights, occupancy, and rate was affirmed as standard.
 - None of the qualifying properties have applied for the room tax permit (initial \$250; \$100 annually), and it is unclear if lodging sites were formally notified.
 - Confusion persists about whether operators were notified or have begun collecting; at least one operator reports no notice and no collection.
 - Original implementation date was January 1, 2026; delays stem from communication gaps and limited village administrative infrastructure.
 - A new target start date of January 1, 2027, was proposed to ensure proper notice and infrastructure, with acknowledgment of staff/board turnover.
 - Room Tax Implementation, Governance, and Administration
 - The EDC aims to clarify room tax history, purpose, and processes, and will present short- and long-term goals by the second August board meeting.

- The Village Board will select a nonprofit to manage the 70% tourism fund, based on EDC recommendations. The entity need not be a dedicated tourism bureau but must use funds for tourism activities benefiting Cambridge, with reporting on usage and outcomes via an application process the EDC plans to develop.
- Committees do not have standalone budgets; funds must be allocated by the board to a general fund line item (e.g., economic development activities).
- Administrative needs include permit forms, quarterly payment tracking (e.g., spreadsheet), and annual state reporting; current approach relies on operator-reported figures. Offers were made to draft permit forms and tracking templates using AI tools if staff bandwidth is limited.
- Marketplace providers (Airbnb, VRBO) must be notified to collect the tax; none are currently known to operate in the village.
- The State of Wisconsin must be notified at least 120 days prior to the effective date; uncertainty remains if prior notice was made. If not, notification is due by approximately October 1 for a January 1 start.

7. NEW BUSINESS – ACTION REQUIRED:

a. Hotel zoning update

- Village Motel is zoned Business Highway (B-H); permitted uses include motels, hotels, tourist homes. Boarding houses and long-term rentals appear in conditional use text, requiring plan commission consideration of nuisances, traffic, and health.
- Dane County Public Health inspects the property; typical residential apartments are not subject to such inspections.
- Consensus is that Village Motel is a motel subject to room tax; a letter will be sent regarding room tax and status.
- Verification is needed on any existing conditional use permit; if one exists, it would have been issued by the village.

b. Review Economic Development Ordinance

- The ordinance's key phrase "facilitate the development" guides EDC's purpose; the committee seeks a plain-language working definition to anchor scope and justify topics and actions without straying from the ordinance.
- The board indicated the committee may revisit the ordinance; current priority is alignment and clear, digestible messaging (synopsis/tagline) that includes quality-of-life aspects of economic development.

c. Discuss Economic Development Plan

- The 2011 economic development plan is lengthy (longer than Comprehensive Plan 2045). One member has deep familiarity and will provide input; further review is needed.
- Options to update the 2011 plan range from professional firm updates (Vierbicher ~29,500; MSA 22,000–30,000) to lower-cost approaches (UW Extension study/brand book ~5,000, student-led analyses via UW-Whitewater). Scope, rigor, and affordability must be balanced.
- Preference is for actionable, SMART-goal-driven plans with periodic review and integration into budgeting to avoid shelfware.
- An overview of 2011 outcomes, including contributions by external parties (e.g., Cambridge Arts Council formation), will inform scope and budget for an update and accountability structure.

d. Goal-setting discussion regarding SMART Goals

- The EDC will attach a corrected "win list" (a four-page compilation of accomplishments, facilitation, and evaluated-no-action decisions) to the next report to the board and use SMART goals to build institutional knowledge and structure.
- SMART Goals, Budget Items, and Collaboration
 - Proposed SMART goals include: implement/administer the room tax; create a working definition for EDC scope and duties; recommend at least one budget item for the 2027 cycle (e.g., Main Street decor, wayfinding signs).

- Wayfinding signs on highways 12/18 may require DOT approval; replacing a dozen signs could cost nearly \$20,000, with considerations for durability, readability, and simplicity.
- The committee will polish the SMART goals list, have each member develop at least one goal for 2027, and present at the next meeting. AI (ChatGPT) may be used to draft and align goals with ordinance language.
- Collaboration with the Plan Commission is under consideration to provide business/economic development perspectives on signs, colors, and long-term project impacts. The EDC seeks to define a working relationship that respects historical pushback and distinct roles.
- Storefront Activity and Ordinance Enforcement
 - Frustration persists with “inactive/underutilized” storefronts used for storage rather than active retail. Past development agreements lacked enforcement.
 - The committee discussed drafting or updating ordinances with specific requirements for operational walk-up retail and exploring fire inspections as a low-barrier compliance lever.

Scott Filter left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

- Murals, Beautification, and Tourism
 - Interest in murals as tourism and placemaking tools; enforcement and alignment with sign and commercial color-scheme ordinances have been inconsistent. Long-term maintenance is a concern.
 - A draft mural ordinance exists for committee consideration. WEDC’s mural toolkit is available; prior attempts stalled due to limited attorney time.
 - Learning from Delavan’s “Wall Dogs” murals (c. 2015) was suggested; each mural reflected local history in collaboration with WEDC.
 - City beautification and habitat gardens are valued; adding this to SMART goals was proposed, with recognition of ongoing volunteer pride and effort.

Matt McFalls left the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

8. QUESTIONS, STAFF REFERRALS, AND FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS:

- a. Continue development of SMART Goals

9. ADJOURNMENT: Kayla Papenfuss made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second by Nadine Breunig.

Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Brian Wilson, Clerk/Treasurer, Village of Cambridge

These minutes are not official until approved by the Economic Development Committee.

Comprehensive Analysis of the Cambridge Economic Development Committee's Role, 2011 Plan, Ordinance, and "Win List"

Executive conclusion

The Economic Development Committee's recent use of SMART Goals—selecting one short-term and one long-term project each year—is broadly consistent with both the 2011 Economic Development Plan and the committee's enabling ordinance.

The 2011 plan did not envision the committee as merely a discussion body. It contemplated an active coordinating role involving business assistance, downtown revitalization, marketing, partnerships, physical improvements, policy recommendations, funding strategies, and measurable implementation. At the same time, the ordinance principally establishes the committee as an **advisory, evaluative, convening, and facilitating body**, rather than an independent operating department.

The most defensible interpretation is:

The Economic Development Committee should identify economic development needs, establish priorities, develop recommendations, convene affected parties, build partnerships, advocate for funding, monitor progress, and help move projects toward implementation. Final authorization, spending, contracting, ordinance adoption, staffing assignments, and major project execution remain with the Village Board and Village staff unless expressly delegated.

Most items on the Win List fit well within this role. Some—particularly beautification, ordinance enforcement, park improvements, general municipal communication, and community-wide ordinances—are appropriately within the committee's scope only when they have a clear and documented connection to business growth, commercial vitality, redevelopment, tourism, property conditions, or the Village's economic development strategy.

1. What the ordinance requires

The ordinance gives the committee the overarching responsibility of working with the Village President, Village Board, other boards and commissions, and Village staff to facilitate a **healthy, diversified economy**. The page-one duties establish the committee as a source of economic evaluations and recommendations, a forum for the business community, and a facilitator of economic development initiatives and budget recommendations.

For analysis purposes, the ordinance can be organized into five functional duties:

O-1. Economic analysis, policy advice, planning, and reporting

The committee is to evaluate and recommend action regarding important local and regional economic issues and policies. This expressly includes:

- Preparing and updating the economic development plan.
- Reporting periodically on economic conditions.

- Reporting on major economic development projects and initiatives.

O-2. Business-community forum and information exchange

The committee is to provide businesses with a public forum for:

- Input on policies and programs affecting business growth.
- Education.
- Exchange of information about economic development issues and opportunities.

O-3. Advancement of initiatives and budget recommendations

The committee is to:

- Articulate economic development initiatives and strategies.
- Facilitate their advancement.
- Recommend items for the Village's capital and operating budgets.

O-4. Industrial revenue bonding policy

The committee is to establish Village guidelines and procedures relating to industrial revenue bonding in accordance with applicable law.

O-5. Assistance with public financing and development

The committee may assist new and established industries with:

- Industrial revenue bond financing.
- Other available public financing.
- Construction, expansion, or repair of industrial and retail facilities.
- Housing development and redevelopment.

The ordinance also allows subcommittees, public meetings, additional citizen participation, and use of Village or outside services, subject to Village Board policy and budgetary approval. The second page contains the financing, subcommittee, staffing, and meeting provisions.

Practical boundary created by the ordinance

The recurring verbs are important: **provide, evaluate, recommend, facilitate, assist, establish guidelines, and report.**

The ordinance does not generally empower the committee to independently:

- Appropriate Village funds.
- Hire contractors.
- direct Village staff.
- Adopt ordinances.
- Commit the Village to contracts.
- Manage another department's operations.
- Undertake construction in its own name.

Therefore, a project can properly be an EDC SMART Goal even when the committee is not the entity that physically completes it. A successful EDC goal may conclude with a recommendation, implementation plan, funding package, partnership agreement, Board referral, or documented handoff to the proper implementing body.

2. Goals and objectives contained in the 2011 Economic Development Plan

The 2011 document was principally a five-year downtown revitalization plan, but it also addressed Village-wide projects and regional partnerships intended to promote business success and economic growth.

The plan's implementation philosophy was incremental. It called for early, visible, measurable improvements to generate confidence and participation before advancing to more complex organizational, funding, redevelopment, and marketing initiatives.

Goal 1 — Produce visible, measurable short-term progress

The first-year goal was to obtain broad participation and demonstrate success through projects with visible impact. The plan emphasized achievable activities implemented with existing community organizations.

Principal objectives

- Launch a short-term downtown revitalization program.
- Activate vacant storefronts.
- Improve appearance and community identity.
- Communicate the plan and demonstrate momentum.
- Complete achievable projects that residents and businesses can see.
- Increase stakeholder confidence and participation.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 1: Launch downtown revitalization program.
- Item 2: Vacant storefront activation.
- Item 4: Outdoor recreation presence and supporting facilities.
- Item 5: Communicate the plan and support "Buy Local."
- Item 9: Wayfinding and pedestrian/bicycle connections.

The short-term action items appear in the implementation table.

Goal 2 — Establish an effective organizational and funding structure

The mid-term goal was to formalize the economic development structure, establish funding, and build momentum. The plan called for a clear lead entity, a point person, partnerships, grant writing, and sustainable funding.

Principal objectives

- Determine who coordinates downtown economic development.
- Establish a dedicated downtown organization or comparable structure.
- Identify stable public and private funding sources.
- Assign a point person or executive director.
- Build participation among businesses, property owners, civic groups, and residents.
- Use early success to leverage grants, contributions, sponsorships, and membership support.

The plan observed that Cambridge lacked the multiple downtown, financing, arts, and advocacy organizations found in comparable successful communities.

It viewed a downtown nonprofit or Community Development Authority as leading structural alternatives, while acknowledging that the EDC could coordinate initial activities.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 3: Downtown TIF district.
- Item 8: Arts council seed funding.
- Item 12: Downtown-focused organization and executive director.
- Funding through grants, TIF, memberships, sponsorships, general funds, charitable giving, and events.

The plan recommended a mix of public and private funding and recognized that startup efforts would likely initially require Village, merchant, and property-owner support.

Goal 3 — Retain, support, and expand existing businesses

The plan characterized business retention as essential to downtown revitalization. It emphasized training, technical assistance, modern marketing, coordinated promotion, business feedback, and access to resources.

Principal objectives

- Reduce avoidable business turnover.
- Provide training in finance, management, marketing, merchandising, social media, and customer service.
- Connect businesses with state, regional, and educational resources.
- Improve communication between businesses and the Village.
- Facilitate coordinated marketing and advertising.
- Help established businesses adapt their business models.
- Improve the customer experience.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 5: Plan communication and Buy Local.
- Item 6: Microbusiness grant and training program.
- Item 7: Revolving loan fund.
- Item 10: Regional connections.

- Item 14: Core business information.
- Item 15: Marketing to local and seasonal customers.

The plan also called for proactive joint marketing rather than promotion limited to individual events.

Goal 4 — Recruit complementary businesses and occupy vacant commercial space

The plan sought businesses that would complement the existing commercial mix, fill unmet consumer demand, increase evening activity, strengthen downtown as a destination, and occupy vacant properties.

Principal objectives

- Target businesses in unmet retail or service categories.
- Maintain current information on available commercial properties.
- Create an online and printed business recruitment package.
- Provide prospects with market, demographic, zoning, incentive, property, and contact information.
- Reduce startup barriers through loans, grants, rent support, or tenant improvements.
- Use business competitions or similar tools to attract entrepreneurs.
- Favor proposals that increase building use, fill service gaps, improve property, and enhance pedestrian activity.

The plan specifically recommended an online community profile with property listings, demographics, business resources, community amenities, and local contacts.

It also proposed a formal system for evaluating requests for financial assistance against community objectives.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 2: Vacant storefront activation.
- Item 7: Revolving loan fund.
- Item 11: Target-market vacant spaces.
- Item 14: Core marketing and business information.
- Item 16: Incentives, capital improvement grants, business-plan contests, and subsidized rent.

Items 11 through 16 are explicitly included in the plan's implementation program.

Goal 5 — Redevelop strategic sites and strengthen the tax base

The plan identified redevelopment as both an economic and physical-planning strategy.

Principal objectives

- Redevelop the former Melster property.
- Encourage downtown infill and mixed-use density.
- Create additional housing near downtown.
- Add senior and multifamily housing options.
- Expand the customer base within walking distance of businesses.
- Improve utilization and value of underused properties.
- Use TIF and other financing tools where appropriate.
- Integrate redevelopment with trails, parks, river access, and public spaces.

The plan identified the Melster site as the largest redevelopment opportunity and contemplated housing, community facilities, riverfront open space, and trail connections.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 3: TIF district and Melster catalyst.
 - Item 13: Melster redevelopment.
 - Item 20: Strategic infill and redevelopment.
 - Item 21: Building and property improvement assistance.
 - Item 22: Trail extension through the Melster area.
 - Item 23: Residential-growth marketing.
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Goal 6 — Improve downtown appearance, identity, property conditions, and public spaces

The plan treated the appearance of commercial properties and public spaces as an economic development issue because appearance affects customer experience, investment confidence, business recruitment, and community identity.

Principal objectives

- Improve building façades and visible parking areas.
- Improve landscaping and streetscape continuity.
- Address unattractive or underused properties.
- Activate empty storefront windows.
- Encourage public art.
- Improve alleys and rear commercial areas visible from public destinations.
- Improve Village Park landscaping.
- Strengthen downtown's cohesive visual identity.
- Use enforcement, incentives, or redevelopment to address deteriorated conditions.

The physical-planning section recommended improved directional signs, pedestrian connections, site improvements, landscaping, façade projects, infill development, and redevelopment.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 2: Vacant storefront activation.
- Item 19: Arts cooperative, storefront displays, and public art.

- Item 20: Strategic infill.
- Item 21: Façade, building, and parking improvement program.
- Item 24: Village Park landscaping.

Items 19 through 24 are listed as long-term recommendations.

Goal 7 — Improve wayfinding, pedestrian and bicycle connections, and access to attractions

The plan identified weak connections between downtown, Lake Ripley, Cam-Rock, the Glacial Drumlin Trail, businesses west of Pleasant Street, and other regional destinations.

Principal objectives

- Direct visitors to downtown businesses and attractions.
- Improve signs for parking, parks, trails, Lake Ripley, and regional destinations.
- Connect the Cam-Rock Trail to Main Street and Lake Ripley.
- Improve bicycle facilities and parking.
- Extend the trail north through the Melster site.
- Make downtown easier to navigate for visitors.
- Convert recreational traffic into customer traffic for local businesses.

The plan expressly noted the lack of signs and trail connections between downtown, Lake Ripley, and regional attractions.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 4: Outdoor recreation presence and facilities.
 - Item 9: Wayfinding and bike/pedestrian connections.
 - Item 22: Cam-Rock trail extension.
-

Goal 8 — Market Cambridge first to local and seasonal customers, then regionally

The plan recommended a sequenced marketing strategy.

Principal objectives

- Initially market to Cambridge residents, nearby rural residents, and Lake Ripley visitors.
- Promote existing businesses, products, services, and events.
- Encourage local spending.
- Gather customer and spending data.
- Expand regional marketing only after the local visitor experience has improved.
- Coordinate messages and advertising among businesses.
- Market Cambridge's arts, outdoor recreation, hospitality, and community character.
- Build partnerships with attractions and neighboring communities.

The plan emphasized local residents and Lake Ripley visitors as the most accessible repeat markets and recommended delaying broad destination marketing until Cambridge's amenities and experience were ready.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 5: Buy Local and community communication.
 - Item 10: Regional representation and cross-marketing.
 - Item 14: Core marketing materials.
 - Item 15: Local and lake-visitor marketing.
 - Item 17: New event series.
 - Item 18: Regional event and attraction partnerships.
 - Item 23: Marketing to homebuyers and builders.
-

Goal 9 — Strengthen tourism, recreation, arts, and events as economic assets

The plan recognized tourism, seasonal residents, Lake Ripley, arts history, events, trails, and outdoor recreation as components of Cambridge's economic base.

Principal objectives

- Capture more spending from people already visiting nearby attractions.
- Expand morning, evening, dining, shopping, and entertainment opportunities.
- Integrate downtown with outdoor recreation.
- Develop events appealing to cyclists, boaters, anglers, artists, families, and other markets.
- Coordinate existing events and attractions.
- Rebuild local arts capacity.
- Establish public art, arts programming, or cooperative space.
- Use regional partnerships to expand market reach.

Relevant implementation items

- Item 4: Outdoor recreation markets.
 - Item 8: Arts council seed funding.
 - Item 17: New event series.
 - Item 18: Event and attraction partnerships.
 - Item 19: Arts cooperative and public art.
 - Item 22: Trail extension.
-

Goal 10 — Use communication, data, partnerships, and coordination to support implementation

The plan repeatedly emphasized that successful economic development would require sustained coordination rather than isolated Village projects.

Principal objectives

- Maintain regular communication with businesses and residents.
- Obtain business and customer data.
- Build partnerships with the Town of Oakland, counties, WEDC, chambers, arts organizations, civic organizations, educational institutions, property owners, and businesses.
- Clearly assign responsibility.
- Coordinate Village policy, budgets, planning, and implementation.
- Report progress and use measurable results to build support.

The implementation plan specifically described a coordinated approach as a means of improving communication and leveraging community resources.

3. Crosswalk of Win List projects to the 2011 plan and ordinance

Accomplished tasks

Win List project	Related 2011 plan goals/objectives	Ordinance relationship	Assessment
Welcome to Cambridge Signs	Goals 1, 6, 7 and 8: visible improvement, community identity, wayfinding, visitor marketing and gateway presence.	O-1 policy evaluation; O-3 advancement of initiatives and budget recommendations.	Strong alignment. Although the 2011 plan focused more specifically on directional and downtown signs, community entrance signs serve the same broader identity and visitor-orientation objectives. The Win List attributes installation directly to renewed committee advocacy.
Storefront Pitch Competition	Goals 3 and 4: business recruitment, entrepreneurship, vacant-space occupancy, incentives, business-plan competition and downtown activation. It closely resembles implementation Item 16's business-plan contest and subsidized startup concept.	O-1 evaluation and recommendation; O-2 business forum; O-3 facilitation of initiatives; O-5 assistance with retail development and public resources.	One of the clearest examples of implementing the plan. It produced two Main Street businesses and was transferred to a partner with greater capacity, which is an appropriate facilitation model.

Win List project	Related 2011 plan goals/objectives	Ordinance relationship	Assessment
Room Tax	Goals 2, 8 and 9: dedicated funding, tourism promotion and hospitality-sector development. It supports the plan's call for a sustainable mix of funding sources, although room tax was not expressly one of the original listed mechanisms.	O-1 policy recommendation; O-3 initiative and budget support; indirectly O-5 assistance with hospitality development. Final ordinance adoption properly rested with the Village Board.	Strong strategic alignment, with an important legal distinction: tourism-related room-tax proceeds remain subject to Wisconsin statutory restrictions and cannot necessarily function as an unrestricted EDC operating fund. The Win List states that the ordinance was adopted to prepare for future lodging development and establish funding.
WEDC Connect Communities Program	Goals 2, 3, 4, 6 and 10: organizational capacity, business resources, revitalization assistance, technical support, training, and partnerships.	O-1 information and evaluation; O-2 education and information exchange; O-3 initiative facilitation; O-5 assistance with business development resources.	Very strong alignment. Oversight by the EDC is directly connected to business support and redevelopment. Local businesses' use of the program reinforces the ordinance's educational function.
Main Street Beautification	Goals 1 and 6: visible progress, downtown aesthetics, landscaping, streetscape identity and visitor experience.	O-1 evaluation; O-3 budget recommendation and advancement of an initiative.	Strong alignment when framed economically. The EDC should focus on the business-district impacts, desired service level and funding recommendation; procurement and day-to-day vendor administration should remain with staff.
Ordinance Enforcement	Goal 6: addressing deteriorated property conditions and protecting the appearance and investment climate of commercial districts. It may also support Goal 3 by responding to business concerns.	O-1 evaluation of economic policy; O-2 business forum; O-3 recommendation.	Conditional alignment. It belongs within the EDC's scope when discussion is tied to commercial-property conditions, vacancies, signs, nuisances, downtown appearance or business confidence. General Village-wide enforcement administration is not an EDC operating responsibility. The Board's contracting action reflects the proper division of authority.

Win List project	Related 2011 plan goals/objectives	Ordinance relationship	Assessment
Forum for Communication with the Business Community	Goals 3 and 10: business retention, information exchange, municipal coordination and gathering business input.	Directly implements O-2 , and also supports O-1 reporting and O-3 facilitation.	Core ordinance responsibility. Bridge reconstruction, permitting, events, beautification and police presence can materially affect business operations.

Evaluated or explored tasks

Evaluated project	Related 2011 plan goals/objectives	Ordinance relationship	Assessment
Communication Improvement	Goals 1, 8 and 10: communicate initiatives, build awareness and improve engagement.	O-1 reporting; O-2 public forum and information exchange; O-3 initiative advancement.	Aligned, but potentially too broad. EDC communications should primarily concern economic conditions, business resources, projects, opportunities and committee work. A general municipal newsletter or social-media program should be a Village-wide administrative initiative.
Doing Business in Cambridge Website Page	Goals 3, 4 and 10; directly mirrors the plan's recommended online business profile and resource package.	O-1 information and policy support; O-2 education; O-3 initiative facilitation; O-5 assistance to new and existing businesses.	Exceptional alignment. This is almost a direct implementation of the plan's recruitment recommendation. It would be an especially suitable SMART Goal because the deliverable can be clearly defined and measured.
Food truck, mural, data-center and sign ordinances	Food trucks relate to Goals 3, 4 and 9; murals relate to Goals 6 and 9; signs relate to Goals 6, 7 and 8; data centers relate more broadly to diversification and development policy but were not a focus of the downtown-oriented 2011 plan.	O-1 evaluation and recommendations on economic policy; O-2 business input; O-3 strategy advancement.	Proper advisory role. The EDC may evaluate economic effects and recommend policy principles. Drafting, legal review, public hearings and adoption should proceed through staff, Plan Commission when applicable, and the Village Board.

Evaluated project	Related 2011 plan goals/objectives	Ordinance relationship	Assessment
2045 Comprehensive Plan and Community Survey	Goals 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10: redevelopment, land use, housing, transportation, community identity, tourism, data and stakeholder engagement.	O-1 expressly encompasses evaluation of major economic issues and updating the economic development plan; O-2 provides a forum; O-3 advances initiatives.	Strong alignment. Economic development input should be coordinated with the Plan Commission rather than substituted for it. The EDC's intended contribution was advisory and within its ordinance.
Wayfinding Signs	Directly implements Goal 7 and plan Item 9; also supports Goals 6, 8 and 9.	O-1 evaluation; O-2 response to business input; O-3 capital-budget and initiative recommendation.	Direct plan implementation. The 2011 plan repeatedly identifies inadequate visitor direction as an economic weakness. The Win List confirms that the matter arose from business requests.
LBK Park Improvements	Most closely relates to Goals 1, 6, 9 and possibly 23/24-type residential and park enhancements, although the 2011 plan focused on downtown Village Park and tourism-related public spaces rather than LBK Park.	O-1 evaluation and O-3 budget/project recommendation only where an economic development rationale is established.	Indirect or limited alignment. A neighborhood park project ordinarily belongs with the Parks Committee. EDC involvement is justified only where the project supports housing development, neighborhood buildout, developer obligations, workforce attraction, tourism, adjacent commercial development or the Village's economic strategy.
Cambridge Christmas Coordination	Goals 1, 8 and 9; implementation Items 17 and 18 called for incorporating existing events, regional tie-ins and partnerships.	O-2 business forum; O-3 facilitation and possible budget recommendation.	Strong alignment. The committee should coordinate economic-development aspects—timing, merchant participation, visitor promotion and infrastructure needs—rather than act as the sole event operator.
Local Business Survey and Site Visits	Goals 3, 8 and 10: business retention, customer and business data, needs assessment, communication and program evaluation.	Directly implements O-1 reporting/evaluation and O-2 business input and information exchange.	Core EDC responsibility. This is one of the strongest potential SMART Goals because it establishes a measurable business-retention and expansion program.

Evaluated project	Related 2011 plan goals/objectives	Ordinance relationship	Assessment
Due Diligence for Updated Economic Development Plan	Updates the entire 2011 framework and recognizes that its original five-year period has expired.	Expressly required by O-1 , which calls for preparing and updating an economic development plan.	Essential and overdue. Obtaining consultant proposals is a legitimate initial step, but the ultimate SMART Goal should include a defined recommendation to the Board regarding scope, process, funding and completion date.

4. Relationship between the ordinance and the 2011 plan

The plan and ordinance are complementary, but they are not identical.

The ordinance defines authority and responsibility

The ordinance establishes what the committee is permitted and expected to do:

- Analyze.
- Advise.
- Convene.
- Recommend.
- Facilitate.
- Assist.
- Report.
- Propose budget priorities.
- Help develop policy and financing tools.

The plan identifies policy direction and projects

The 2011 plan supplies substantive priorities:

- Downtown revitalization.
- Business retention and recruitment.
- Redevelopment.
- Marketing.
- Tourism and recreation.
- Organizational capacity.
- Funding.
- Wayfinding.
- Beautification.
- Events.
- Housing.
- Partnerships.

Neither document makes every economic project an EDC-operated project

For example:

- A wayfinding initiative may be an EDC goal, but engineering, procurement and installation would be handled through staff and Board authorization.
- A business survey may be directly conducted by the EDC with staff support.
- An ordinance may be studied and recommended by the EDC, but adopted only by the Board.
- A park project may be recommended because of its economic impact, but implemented through the Parks Committee and Village staff.
- A redevelopment incentive may be proposed by the EDC, but legally structured and approved by the Village Board.

This distinction can resolve much of the current disagreement over the committee's role.

5. Evaluation of the proposed SMART Goal approach

Selecting **one short-term and one long-term goal each year** is consistent with the 2011 plan's staged implementation model. The plan itself distinguished short-term, mid-term and long-term projects and emphasized immediate, measurable results that would create confidence for larger projects.

It would be advisable, however, to define two types of outcomes.

Short-term SMART goal

A short-term project should normally be capable of completion within the calendar or committee year and produce a visible or measurable result.

Examples:

- Publish the Doing Business in Cambridge webpage by October 31.
- Conduct visits with 15 businesses and present a findings report by November.
- Prepare a wayfinding sign plan, cost estimate and capital-budget recommendation by August.
- Complete an annual economic conditions report by September.
- Develop and recommend commercial-property enforcement priorities by June.

Long-term SMART goal

A long-term project should be structured around an annual milestone rather than promising that the committee will independently complete a multiyear capital or development project.

Examples:

- Complete consultant selection and recommend funding for an updated economic development plan.
- Develop a business-retention and expansion program to be implemented over 24 months.
- Complete a feasibility study and funding strategy for downtown wayfinding.
- Prepare a redevelopment strategy for a designated site.

- Establish a three-year plan for a sustainable business-recruitment or storefront competition program.
- Develop an economic-development funding policy and annual program budget.

Recommended wording convention

Each SMART Goal should identify:

1. **Economic purpose:** What economic condition is being addressed?
2. **Plan connection:** Which adopted plan goal or recommendation supports it?
3. **Ordinance authority:** Which EDC duty applies?
4. **EDC deliverable:** What will the committee actually produce?
5. **Implementing body:** Who has authority to complete the resulting action?
6. **Measurement:** How will completion or impact be evaluated?
7. **Deadline:** When will the EDC deliverable be completed?
8. **Resources:** What staff time, consultant services or funding are needed?

This structure prevents the committee from being held responsible for actions outside its authority while preserving accountability.

6. Areas of particularly strong historical alignment

The Win List demonstrates especially strong performance in four areas.

Business recruitment and entrepreneurship

The Storefront Pitch Competition closely implements the 2011 recommendation for targeted business incentives and a business-plan competition. Its outcome—two new Main Street businesses—is directly measurable and materially advances downtown occupancy.

Business communication and support

The business forum, Connect Communities participation, proposed business website, survey discussions and proposed business visits are directly consistent with the ordinance's forum and information-exchange function.

Downtown appearance and visitor experience

Entrance signs, Main Street beautification, wayfinding discussions, Cambridge Christmas coordination and property-enforcement discussions reflect the plan's emphasis on visible improvements and commercial-district identity.

Planning and policy advice

Room tax, ordinance reviews, comprehensive-plan input and due diligence for an updated economic development plan reflect the committee's formal advisory responsibilities.

7. Areas where clearer boundaries would be helpful

General municipal communication

The EDC should communicate economic development information and business resources. It should not become the default committee responsible for all Village communications.

General ordinance enforcement

The EDC may identify commercial-property or business-district impacts and recommend policy. It should not supervise enforcement personnel or determine individual enforcement cases.

Parks and beautification

The EDC should participate where the project has an identified economic, downtown, tourism, housing-development or business-district effect. Routine parks operations should remain with the designated parks body and staff.

Event management

The EDC may facilitate coordination, identify economic objectives and recommend Village support. Routine event production is ordinarily best performed by business, tourism, nonprofit or event organizations.

Legislative and regulatory matters

The EDC should evaluate economic effects and recommend policy. Legal drafting, code administration and final legislative action belong to staff, appropriate commissions and the Village Board.

8. Recommended statement of role

The Village could adopt the following as an operating statement without changing the ordinance:

The Economic Development Committee serves as the Village's principal advisory and coordinating body for economic development. The committee evaluates economic conditions and policies; provides a forum for the business community; recommends plans, programs, ordinances, financing tools and budget priorities; facilitates partnerships and economic development initiatives; and reports progress to the Village Board. The committee may champion and coordinate projects but does not independently appropriate funds, direct staff, enter contracts, adopt ordinances or assume the operational duties of Village departments or other committees unless specifically authorized by the Village Board.

9. Overall findings

The record supports five central conclusions:

1. **The Win List is substantially connected to the 2011 Economic Development Plan.** Several accomplishments, especially the Storefront Pitch Competition, business forum, Connect Communities participation, beautification, wayfinding work and economic-plan update, are direct or near-direct implementations of recommendations in that plan.
2. **The Win List is substantially consistent with the ordinance.** The activities generally involve evaluation, recommendation, business engagement, policy development, partnership building or facilitation.
3. **Not every activity has equal economic-development relevance.** LBK Park, broad communication programs and general ordinance enforcement require a clearly stated economic nexus to avoid duplication with other committees or staff functions.
4. **The EDC may appropriately pursue projects without being the final implementing entity.** Facilitating an outcome through Collaborative 523, WEDC, Village staff, another committee or the Village Board is fully consistent with the ordinance.
5. **The proposed annual SMART Goal model is appropriate.** It will work best when goals are expressed as committee-controlled deliverables—plans, recommendations, partnerships, reports, funding strategies or completed programs—rather than outcomes that depend entirely on developers, staff, the Board or external organizations.

EDC Statement of Scope

The EDC exists to advise the village board on economic development, per the ordinance 2.80.010. We research, discuss, and make recommendations on economic issues and policies for Village staff, the board, and other commissions to act on. We give the business community a public forum, develop and advance economic strategies, and assist with public financing for business development.

EDC Scope Check:

Does this item:

- Attract, retain, or expand business in the Village?
- Affect Cambridge's economic future?
- Relate to economic planning or policy?

Can we:

- Hold a forum or gather community input?
- Evaluate this further?
- Recommend a policy or strategy?
- Refer this to someone who can help?

Right now, are we:

- Providing info?
- Making an evaluation or recommendation?
- Requesting action from Village staff, board, or another commission?
- Parking it for future use?

Village of Cambridge
Economic Development Committee
June 30, 2026

“Win” List

Accomplished Tasks

Welcome to Cambridge Signs

The Economic Development Committee renewed interest in the effort to realize the Welcome to Cambridge signs, an effort that fell dormant years prior. It is a direct result of this committee's efforts that the signs are now installed.

Storefront Pitch Competition

Cambridge's Storefront Pitch Competition was an idea originally proposed to the Economic Development Committee. The committee worked with UW-Whitewater's Enactus team to facilitate bringing this opportunity to Cambridge. The committee invited Collaborative 523 Inc. to execute the competition, as their organization was better equipped with funding and bandwidth to accomplish the desired outcome.

The Storefront Pitch Competition resulted in the creation and establishment of two new businesses in Cambridge's historic downtown district: Cambridge & Co. Confectionary and Mustard Seed Books. Both businesses occupy retail space on Main Street.

The competition gained considerable momentum, to the extent that Collaborative 523 Inc. decided to run a second cohort of the competition again in 2026. A third cohort is expected to launch in 2027, with a more flexible approach to business development throughout Cambridge.

Room Tax

A Room Tax ordinance was created by the Economic Development Committee and passed by the Village Board on December 10, 2024. The tax was intended to be a proactive measure to support Cambridge should a major hotel operator choose to develop in the community. Retrofitting a tax structure after a development proposal arrives could be seen as unfairly targeted. In addition, the Room Tax provides a dedicated funding source for the committee.

WEDC Connect Communities Program

The Economic Development Committee serves as the body that oversees the Village's participation in the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's *Connect Communities* Program. This is a low-cost program (\$200/year) that provides participating communities with access to resources, training, toolkits, consulting services, technical assistance and more. The program's focus is to help communities pursue revitalization and redevelopment efforts. Many of Cambridge's local businesses take advantage of the WEDC resources offered by this program.

Main Street Beautification

Throughout years of transition amongst Village staff, the Economic Development Committee has helped to ensure that Main Street beautification efforts remain ongoing. Such efforts require advanced planning and funding allocation, as flowers and holiday garland must be reserved by the outside vendor (Avid Gardener) many months in advance. When recent budget cuts forced the elimination of these efforts, the committee identified multiple alternatives for funding and ultimately provided a recommendation to the Village Board.

Ordinance Enforcement

As a direct result of the committee's discussions at their June 2026 meeting, the Village Board contracted with a third-party vendor to provide ordinance enforcement.

Forum for Communication with the Business Community

The committee has provided an open forum for communication with the local business community. Such examples include providing businesses with regular updates regarding the Water Street Bridge Reconstruction project, Main Street beautification efforts, permitting and police presence for local events and evaluation of other topics relevant to local businesses.

Evaluated Tasks

Communication Improvement

The committee has evaluated ways in which to improve transparent communication to the public about our activities and that of the municipal government. Such considerations included a village email listserv, a community newsletter and village Facebook page.

Doing Business in Cambridge Website Page

The committee drafted a comprehensive “Doing Business in Cambridge” page to add to the Village website. The intent of this page was to provide an organized collection of resources relevant to conducting business in Cambridge, including permits, contact details, information for food truck operators, building inspection information, resources for local businesses (such as WEDC, Visit Cambridge Wisconsin, Collaborative 523 Inc). This webpage was never realized due to a lack of staff bandwidth, however, a complete outline for the page exists.

Ordinance Consideration

The creation or update of the following ordinances have been considered by the committee: food trucks, murals, data centers, sign ordinance updates.

2045 Comprehensive Plan & Community Survey

The committee spent significant time considering ways in which we could offer a beneficial influence during the comprehensive plan update. In particular, the committee was interested in inserting several well-researched questions to include in the community survey relating to economic and community development. Ultimately, the Plan Commission did not work with the Economic Development Committee, and none of the suggested questions were included in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Wayfinding Signs

At the request of local businesses, the committee has considered installing wayfinding signs around downtown Cambridge to direct visitors to local parks, public restrooms and public parking.

LBK Park Improvements

Prior to the formation of the dedicated park improvement committee, the Economic Development Committee had discussed ways in which to move progress forward with the buildout of LBK Park in the Vineyards neighborhood.

Cambridge Christmas Coordination

The committee has assisted with the coordination of Cambridge Christmas in partnership with the business community. An important request of local businesses is ensuring that the decorative garlands and lighting displays are installed prior to Small Business Saturday each November.

Local Business Survey

The committee has discussed ways in which to improve our service to our local economy, including with our local business community. We thoroughly discussed the possibility of creating and disseminating a one-time survey to local businesses. In addition, we considered conducting site visits to local businesses to learn more about their needs from the municipality, spread out over a 24-month period.

Due Diligence for an Updated Economic Development Plan

In 2026, the committee began due diligence efforts to create an updated economic development plan. The Village's current plan was drafted in 2011. The Economic Development Committee kicked off this effort by obtaining cost quotes from professional consultants to understand what this effort would cost.

SMART Goals Worksheet

S.M.A.R.T.	Questions
Specific	Does the goal clearly and specifically state what the committee is trying to achieve? Can the goal be described in one or two sentences? What's the bottom line?
Measurable	How will the committee know if progress is being made on achieving the goal? Can the committee quantify or assign numbers to the outcome?
Attainable	Is achieving the goal dependent on anyone else? Is it possible to reframe the goal so it only depends on you and not others? What factors may prevent the committee from accomplishing the goal?
Relevant	What are the benefits of achieving this goal to either the Economic Development Community, the Village of Cambridge or the broader community? Why does it matter?
Time-Bound	When will the committee reach this goal? Can smaller, time-bound steps be assigned to this goal for accountability?

Room Tax Administration

Kayla Papenfuss

Specific: Have necessary framework in place to begin administration and collection of the Room Tax by January 1, 2027.

Measurable: The committee will know that progress is being made toward the goal as the following sub-goals are accomplished. The committee shall track progress on a monthly basis.

1. Village staff to file Form SL-304 with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. (It does not appear that this form was ever filed as the Village of Cambridge is not included on a list of municipalities with Room Tax Ordinances in place as of December 31, 2025.)
2. Create a Room Tax Application for subject entities.
3. Notify subject entities that enforcement of the Room Tax will begin on January 1, 2027. Included with the notification should be a copy of the Room Tax Ordinance language and the informational application.
4. Verify that Marketplace Providers do not need to be separately noticed; it appears that they may be required to review the Department of Revenue's list on an annual basis.
5. The committee shall include "Room Tax progress update" as a standing agenda item through the remainder of 2026.
6. The committee shall create a description or scope of tourism activities to be performed by the named nonprofit entity.

7. The committee shall create and release a Request for Proposals to solicit interest from nonprofit entities.
8. Village staff to publish information about the Room Tax on the Village website so that it is publicly available to the community and potential new lodging operators.

Attainable: The goal is attainable, however, several key tasks are dependent on Village staff. The committee can assist with creating a clear checklist of tasks to be completed in order of priority, monitoring monthly progress and assisting with smaller tasks as appropriate.

Relevant: The Room Tax Ordinance was passed on December 10, 2024 by the Village Board. The community stands to lose approximately \$10,000 per year if the ordinance is not fully implemented. Tax revenue shall be used to support both the Economic Development Community and tourism promotion for Cambridge.

Time-Bound: The goal will be reached by January 1, 2027. Several smaller steps can be assigned to this goal for accountability throughout the process.

EDC to “claim” WEDC’s Connect Communities Relationship

Kayla Papenfuss

Specific: The Economic Development Committee shall assume responsibility for managing and maintaining the Village’s membership in the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation’s Connect Communities Program.

Measurable: The committee will know that progress is being made towards the goal with the assignment of one (or two) committee members who will take responsibility for achieving this goal each year. The committee member(s) shall provide quarterly check-ins with the committee to ensure progress, and to summarize the content of the trainings attended. Additionally, the committee member(s) shall be responsible for ensuring that the annual report is completed on time.

Attainable: The goal is easily attainable and friction can be mitigated using the following factors:

1. The committee must obtain a copy of the program’s Participation Agreement to verify program requirements.
2. Each year, the committee shall assign one to two members to manage the Connect Communities Program relationship.
3. The assigned committee member(s) shall not have a term expiring in April of the upcoming year that the annual report is due.
4. The committee shall request funding appropriation from the Village Board to pay for the annual program fee.

5. The selected committee member(s) shall contact Errin Welty at WEDC and request to be added to the Downtown Development online portal for access to resources.

Relevant: The Connect Communities Program provides participants with access to resources, toolkits, consulting, training opportunities and more with the intended purpose of assisting community revitalization initiatives. Cambridge has been a member of the program since 2014, although our membership previously lapsed due to non-participation. Significant effort was done by a former committee member to reinstate our membership. The program provides low-cost (\$200/yr.) resources that are beneficial to Cambridge's economic stability and growth.

Time-Bound: The goal will be reached annually in June with the successful completion and submission of the required yearly report and program fee. This goal will be achieved by remaining in good standing with the Connect Communities program.

Establish a Mural Competition to Drive Tourism

Betsy Busch

Specific: The Economic Development Committee shall facilitate a mural competition in Cambridge. Murals function as interactive social media marketing tools that turn public art into a participatory, digital experience. Examples include: quilt squares, augmented reality murals, wings, historical murals, nature murals, anamorphic and 3D optical illusions. Tourist and selfie-driven demand for these types of installations remains high.

Measurable: The presence of new murals will indicate progress towards the goal; increased tourism, foot traffic and social media posts will provide a metric of success for the mural competition.

Attainable: The goal heavily dependent on outside parties, including commercial building owners and artists. The largest inhibiting factor is monetary funding. However, in addition to Room Tax revenue, sponsorships and donors could be solicited for the creation and perpetual maintenance of the murals. The lifespan of the artwork is expected to be 10-20 years.

Relevant: This initiative aims to increase business visibility and foot traffic, helping to strengthen Cambridge's business economy. Cambridge enjoys a vibrant arts community and is host to other public art installations (sculptures) throughout downtown that draw tourists, provide photo opportunities and generate social media interest.

Time-Bound: The project will begin in July 2027, as this allows for two quarters of room tax revenue to be collected. Murals will be painted in spring and summer 2028. Other key time-bound steps include soliciting artist renderings, collecting and distributing funds, publishing press releases, soliciting community involvement, etc.

Create Alignment Between Village Board and EDC

Scott Filter

Specific: Align the Village Board with the committee's efforts and objectives. Provide Trustees with informational updates regarding our key priorities and their importance to constituents. Clearly communicate *why* the committee exists, the value it provides, and why its work is important to the broader community.

Measurable: Use SMART Goals to create a roadmap for the Village Board. Use the roadmap to create a clearer vision regarding the committee's purpose. SMART Goals are inherently measurable, so accomplishing goals will provide a metric for success (i.e. the committee's "win list.").

Attainable: This goal is easily attainable and relies directly on committee members; staff and outside involvement can be minimized.

Relevant: This directly relates to the core purpose of the committee.

Time-Bound: A six-month process is suggested to provide adequate time to accomplish this goal.

Create Project List for Each Committee Member

Scott Filter

Specific: The committee shall create a project list with tasks that are assigned to each committee member. This requires members to take personal responsibility for specific tasks and provides the committee with accountability for members. Potential ideas include:

1. Procuring bicycle racks for community and tourist use;
2. Work with local businesses to alleviate pain points and drive success;
3. Evaluate options for addressing unoccupied and vacant commercial buildings.

Measurable: The committee can use the selected SMART Goals to inform the task list for each member. Accomplishing SMART Goals will provide a metric for success. The Economic Development Committee shall accomplish six to eight "wins" per year.

Attainable: This goal is easily attainable and relies directly on committee members; staff and outside involvement can be minimized.

Relevant: The list's purpose is to assist with moving the committee's progress forward. The committee's accomplishments shall demonstrate value to the Village Board and the local community.

Time-Bound: Six to eight “wins” aligning with the committee’s purpose shall be accomplished on an annual basis.

Establish Guidance for Economic Development Priorities and Planning Efforts

Matt McFalls

Goal 1: The Economic Development Committee shall produce a statement of scope to quickly evaluate agenda items and clarify the committee’s output.

Goal 2: Complete a review of the 2011 Economic Development Plan. Mark each recommendation as “completed,” “no longer relevant” or “priorities for further action” and present these findings to the Village Board.

Goal 3: Evaluate the need and scope for an updated Economic Development Plan based on the 2011 plan review, current economic conditions and community input. Provide a recommendation to the Village Board regarding next steps.

Goal 4: Based on the findings of Goal 2, identify a qualified contractor, secure necessary approvals, and develop an updated Economic Development plan by a specified date.

Explore Activating Vacant or Underutilized Commercial Buildings

Nadine Breunig

SMART Goal not yet submitted as of August 3, 2026 at 1:00 PM.