

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT  
MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2015 – 7:00PM  
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Vice Chairman Bill Bohan, Bill Baxter, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd; Alternate John Burdick

**ABSENT:** David Childs, Jim Brett, David Krimmel, Mark Russo, Bob Switzgable; Alternate Cindy Donaldson .

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** WPCA Chair Denton Butler, Roy Litchfield, Joe Toro, Elaine Santoro, Bruno Santoro

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.**

Vice Chairman Bill Bohan called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM. Mr. Burdick was seated for Jim Brett.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:  
December 8, 2014 regular meeting.**

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Mrs. LaPlante, to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2014 regular meeting; unanimously approved.

**March 9, 2015 regular meeting.**

**MOTION** Mr. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2015 regular meeting; unanimously approved. Mr. Baxter abstained.

**3. NEW PROCEDURES FOR EDC MEETINGS**

Vice Chairman Bohan passed around proposed meeting guidelines to keep the group more focused and productive in meetings. Group should discuss topics one at a time, keep commentary brief and on point. Off-topic commentary will be deferred to the "Parking Lot" for the end of the meeting or as an agenda item at the next meeting.

Mr. Burdick inquired if these items had been shared with Chairman Childs. Vice Chairman Bohan indicated that he had discussed the guidelines and the agenda in detail with Chairman Childs.

Vice Chairman Bohan continued to describe the points on the guidelines including selecting three to four key projects and having a goal of 100% participation to achieve the objectives.

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to proceed with the guidelines as proposed. Ms. Lloyd commented that she feels that past agendas for the Commission have been too long. She would like to see the Agenda be more realistic to only encompass items

that can be accomplished in the time frame without being carried over from month to month.

Vice Chairman Bohan inquired if the group would agree to use the "Parking Lot" for items to be set on the next month's agenda. Mr. Baxter commented that the Chair needs to retain control of the meeting. Mr. Bohan indicated that he would assist the Chair with remaining on target. Ms. Lloyd suggested that a separate person from the Chair serve as Time Keeper and set a limit for each agenda topic.

Vice Chairman Bohan called for a vote – unanimously approved.

#### **4. DISCUSSION ON BANNERS TO PROMOTE TOWN THEME**

Mr. Burdick commented that he believes they have been ordered and have started to be switched out.

#### **5. COMMISSION BUDGET**

Vice Chairman Bohan commented that the new budget for the Commission is \$10,000 which is a \$5,000 cut. Ms. Lloyd inquired about what would not be completed since the budget had been cut by a third. Mrs. LaPlante commented that she had checked and the website maintenance fees are just under \$2,000 per year.

Vice Chairman Bohan indicated that he believes a regular agenda item should be a review of the Commission budget, what had been spent and what funds are remaining.

#### **6. CONNECTICUT SPRING GETAWAY GUIDE**

Ms. Lloyd commented that she had shared information on the getaway guide with the Commission a couple months ago. It was extremely expensive to be included and seemed to be focused toward businesses not municipalities.

Mr. Baxter proposed that the agenda be altered to allow any members of the public to speak.

Mr. Roy Litchfield asked to address the Commission regarding the public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission held last week regarding the move of the package store on Litchfield Turnpike. A letter from the Chairman of the EDC was sent to the Planning & Zoning Commission supporting the special exception. Mr. Litchfield felt that there was insufficient research done as the owner of the property that received the special exception is delinquent in paying his taxes to the town. If he does not make any payments, the next tax bill in July would make his property eligible for tax sale.

Commission Clerk Ventre mentioned that the Tax Collector had previously proposed an ordinance that would allow the Building Department to withhold permits for properties with delinquent taxes, but that the ordinance had not been presented for

public approval at Town Meeting and there are currently no restrictions that permit approval to be withheld for delinquent taxes.

## **7. UPDATES**

### **E. WPCA**

Mr. Litchfield shared that the WPCA is moving forward and selected an attorney at their last meeting. They plan to interview Engineering firms at a Special Meeting later this week. Mr. Toro indicated that they are seeking endorsement of their Line Extension Analysis Plan from the Commission.

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Mrs. LaPlante, to ENDORSE the WPCA plan. Unanimously approved.

### **A. Plan of Conservation & Development**

Ms. Lloyd commented that she believes that anything which this Commission wants to be accomplished should be included in the Plan. She believes that Rails to Trails should be included in the Plan. Vice Chairman Bohan questioned whether there should be a subcommittee to meet with Steve. Mr. Burdick indicated that we are past the time when those comments were due as it has to be finalized by June 1<sup>st</sup> to be sent to Chalder.

Mr. Burdick clarified that the Downtown Plan on the shelf at the library is from 1995 and has been whittled down and modified over the years. Mr. Baxter commented that he had spoken with a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission who was working on the Plan of Conservation and Development who was not aware of the Downtown Center Plan that was being developed at the same time. Mrs. LaPlante commented that when she was Chair of the Planning & Zoning Commission, she was contacted by Mason Beekley and told of his interest in funding a Town Center study. So Planning & Zoning developed the first Town Center Study. The current revised Plan was initiated by the Board of Selectmen. Once completed, the Planning and Zoning Commission will adopt the Downtown Center Plan as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Mr. Burdick further commented that when the Downtown Center Plan was presented to the library, they objected to parts of the Plan, specifically as to placing parking lots on the library property. He believes that the library has adequate parking because they use the municipal lot behind the Immaculate Conception Church for overflow parking. Another member commented that the lot is municipal parking and is not dedicated to the library. Mrs. LaPlante indicated that the Downtown Plan is a vision not set in stone.

Mrs. LaPlante suggested that the Commission set a Special Meeting to meet with Steve Sadlowski, Zoning Enforcement Officer, to offer feedback on the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Baxter commented that all the Boards and Commissions should have offered input. Mr. Burdick proposed that

either a subcommittee or the full commission meet with Steve to review the proposal and make sure that Rails to Trails is included.

Commission Clerk Ventre obtained the copies of the EDC proposal submitted to Planning & Zoning and distributed them to those present. Mr. Burdick asked if the meeting could be set up with Steve. Mrs. LaPlante offered to obtain the EDC chapter from Steve and send it out to the Commission members for review.

**B. Rails to Trails**

Vice Chairman Bohan explained that the subcommittee had met with First Selectman Jerram to lay out where the trail would follow the rail bed. Mr. Burdick commented that there are arrows on the proposed plan with questions regarding where the trail would track along Callahan Park. The intent is to establish a trail from Barkhamsted that would meet up with the trail in Collinsville.

Mr. Bohan attended a meeting in Barkhamsted through their parks service with stakeholders where the majority of those in attendance were opposed to the environmental impact of the trail. Mr. Burdick had an opportunity to speak with Kevin Witkos and received positive support for the Rails to Trails. The next step will be to look for funding.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that the Board of Finance has passed a motion that requires any line item transfers be presented to them for approval in the month in which they are required. She recommends that any Commission members who know members of the Board of Finance share information about the Rails to Trails plan.

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to send a letter to the Board of Finance from Vice Chairman Bohan requesting their support of the Rails to Trails project. Mr. Baxter recommended that the subcommittee keep the First Selectman informed that they will be sending the letter. Unanimously approved.

**C. Mountain Bikes**

Mr. Burdick commented that Jeremy Schaller is working with Dave Childs to get a trail through Nepaug into the downtown area. Mr. Schaller would also like to meet with the Rails to Trails Committee about having a parking area where families could split up and some go mountain biking while others walk the trail.

**D. Street Paintings**

No status at this time.

**F. Former Waring Building**

No status at this time.

**G. Hurley Property**

A question was raised about the status of the brewery that will be opening. Commission Clerk commented that they had called to inquire about filing their Trade Name Certificate.

**7. IDEAS FOR NEW EDC PROJECTS**

Vice Chairman Bohan listed items that he would suggest for possible projects for the EDC including Rails to Trails, Golf Course, cross promotions such as coupons for restaurants or other businesses on ski tickets. He also mentioned a possible promotion at the end of the skiing season of a downhill cardboard race.

He would like to list possible projects on the Board, have members vote using post-its, then identify the top 3 projects and select project leaders. Due to the lateness of the hour, this will be the first agenda item at the May meeting.

Mr. Burdick mentioned Celebrate Northwest Connecticut, Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> and indicated that if we are not participating this year we should look into doing so in the future.

Ms. Lloyd commented that she wanted to share something positive in that she had heard that Peter Bakker Agency would be moving to the Hoffman Hardware building. A discussion ensued about whether the move of an existing business within town actually could be considered growth. Comments were made indicating that the Bakker Agency clients would then be drawn to the downtown area and could result in increased traffic to area businesses whereas their current location is more secluded. Mrs. LaPlante commented that there may be another insurance agency opening in the current location.

**8. ANY BUSINESS PROPER TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

Vice Chairman Bohan mentioned that if we are able to plan some of the future projects, the Commission could consider hiring a part-time Event Planner to oversee some of these events. Ms. Lloyd indicated that the Commission has also discussed hiring a Marketing person. Mrs. LaPlante indicated that the Commission needs to review the budget and decide where the funds should be allocated. Mr. Burdick commented that the Commission could provide seed money for an event and then additional payment would be from the event proceeds.

Ms. Lloyd commented that the Commission should follow-up with the individual who had agreed to prepare the bar codes. Mr. Burdick suggested that a letter be sent to follow up and request a status.

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to purchase membership in the Connecticut Main Street if dues will not exceed \$500. Unanimously approved. Mr. Burdick will follow-up.

**9. “PARKING LOT” ITEMS (Part of new procedures)**

New EDC Projects

When opportunities to advertise for the town are presented – how are they received and forwarded to the EDC?

Connecticut Main Street funding

**10. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to adjourn at 8:35 PM; unanimously approved.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre  
Commission Clerk**