

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, MAY 11, 2015 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Vice Chairman Bill Bohan, Bill Baxter (7:06), David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd; Mark Russo, Alternates John Burdick and Cindy Donaldson.

ABSENT: David Childs, Jim Brett, Bob Switzgable.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: None

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Vice Chairman Bill Bohan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mr. Burdick was seated for Jim Brett. Ms. Donaldson was seated for Bob Switzgable.

Vice Chairman Bohan reviewed the meeting guidelines discussed at last month's meeting for the members who were not present.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
April 13, 2015 regular meeting.**

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2015 regular meeting; unanimously approved. Mr. Russo and Ms. Donaldson abstained.

3. IDEAS FOR NEW EDC PROJECTS

Vice Chairman Bohan explained that he would like to collect ideas for new EDC projects and then take a vote on them to determine the top three to be focused upon:

- **Golf** – golf course behind Marandino's with an inn and interfacing with housing and the Rails to Trails
- ***Communication** – some way to communicate to the public what weekly meetings and events are coming up. David feels it needs to be blasted to all members of the Boards and Commissions on Fridays for the following week.
- ***Media Kit** – a package of information to sell the town that can be sent out electronically upon request.
- **Fishing Derby** – for the past 7 years 95-125 fishermen have signed up for the derby. This should be closer to 500 by now, so a national marketing campaign should be considered to draw participants from across the country.

- **Farm Food Hub** – NWHCOG won a \$45,000 grant to conduct a study to establish a food hub where farmers can congregate for restaurants to purchase their products. There is the potential that the Waring building could be used as the location for this.
- ***Sign Depot** – Arrange for a location where signs could be placed for a special event a week prior to the event where signs would not be removed by DOT.
- ***Publicity Outreach** – There have been publications which highlighted other area towns. We should be getting our town featured in some of these publications.
- **Cross Marketing** – Coupons on the back of lift tickets for local restaurants, work with local businesses to cross market with each other. Perhaps the Business Council could coordinate this.
- **Strategic Plan/Real Estate Marketing** – Commission needs to be more planning oriented rather than task oriented. There should be more strategic planning to move us in the direction we'd like to pursue. What can be done to facilitate the sale of the gateway or to fill the vacant properties.
- **High density housing** – Pocket housing is a trend in other areas of the country.
- **Gateway / Corner Property** – A proposal had been suggested for the Corner Property as a Gateway incorporating a restaurant and agricultural, artistic and outdoor themes depending upon the season.
- **Fairy House Festival** – Old Lyme Museum does an annual Fairy House Festival where artists create the Fairy Houses and 20,000 people come to see the houses and they charge admission. This could be something that is created in conjunction with another event to draw visitors to the town.
- **Library Addition** – The library has received a \$630,000 grant from the State which needs to be matched 1 for 1. They have retained the architect who designed the building 20 years ago. Mr. Baxter commented that the library addition should be designed in cooperation with the downtown plan. There has been a pattern in the past of not working cooperatively. The proposed downtown plan is an effort to bring all the areas together into a common design.
- **Marketing Consultant for the Town** – Mr. Burdick had a conversation with Jim Fitzgerald, Reggie Smith and Steve Tuxbury about retaining a Marketing Consultant and they seemed supportive. Collinsville just received a grant to market their town.

Mr. Russo asked that the Media Kit and Publicity Outreach be combined with the Marketing Consultant. Ms. Donaldson indicated that the Media Kit and Publicity

Outreach and Communication should be combined but that the Marketing Consultant should remain separate as it is a paid position which is not in this year's budget. Mrs. LaPlante indicated that the Sign Depot should also be combined with the Media Kit, Publicity Outreach and Communication.

Commission members were given 4 post-it notes with which to vote for their project preferences.

The combined Marketing Communication, Media Kit, Publicity Outreach and Sign Depot received the most votes.

Strategic Planning/Real Estate and Marketing Consultant received tie votes in second place.

Ms. Donaldson will chair the Marketing project with Ms. Lloyd supporting her together with other members of the Commission.

Mr. Baxter will coordinate the Strategic Planning/Real Estate project. Mr. Burdick, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Krimmel will work on the Marketing Consultant project and look into applying for a grant as Collinsville did.

Mr. Burdick commented that the other projects on the list can still happen such as the fishing derby and the Commission will support them. Mr. Bohan indicated that the list will be retained and as priority projects are completed additional projects can be addressed.

4. TOWN ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES TO EDC

A discussion ensued about how this topic was brought forward from last month's parking lot. The question was raised as to whether the town belongs to the Northwest Chamber. Commission members will prepare lists of any organizations they believe the town should belong to for the next meeting so that dues can be paid at the beginning of the fiscal year.

5. CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET FUNDING

Mr. Burdick indicated that Kim Whitaker would like come to a June meeting with representatives of multiple commissions. Mr. Baxter suggested that the EDC take the lead and schedule her presentation at the June meeting and invite other Boards and Commissions to attend that meeting. Mr. Burdick indicated that she did not wish to attend the regular meeting of any Commission but rather schedule a special combined meeting. He will follow up with her for possible dates.

New Hartford needs to become a member and will owe \$500 in July to do so. Mr. Baxter suggested that the funds be allocated from the current fiscal year budget in order to bring her in to meet with the Commissions in June. Mr. Bohan will arrange for the check to be cut.

6. UPDATES

A. Rails to Trails

Mr. Bohan updated that they attended a meeting where he was able to have a conversation with the President of the NWHCOG who suggested that a Kings Mark Environmental Study would help to plot the trail route and identify any environmental concerns. He obtained the name of a contact to begin this process. Mr. Bohan will contact her to do so. Mr. Burdick indicated that they have also begun discussions with some of the abutting property owners.

B. Street Paintings

Ms. Lloyd attended the first Committee meeting. The plan is that this event will happen on Saturday of the weekend of New Hartford Day (September 19, 2015). Mr. Baxter commented that the project had been dropped due to insufficient funds from a grant. Ms. Lloyd indicated that the Town had committed funds to help make the project a reality. The town has committed \$3,500 and they need to fundraise the other half. They do have the need for funds to prepare posters and postcards by the end of May. Ms. Lloyd would like to propose that the Commission support their efforts to produce the posters. No one else in the area has done a project of this sort. The closest project was in Brooklyn, New York.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Baxter, to allocated \$500 toward this project with the stipulation that they need to demonstrate evidence of how the funds have been used by the June meeting or return the check. Unanimously approved.

C. Plan of Conservation & Development

Mr. Krimmel commented that although he didn't attend the last meeting he was unsure what items were missing because the missing items referenced in the minutes were in the version that he had. The updated version had been sent to the Commission following last month's meeting.

Mr. Baxter commented that there needs to be collaboration on all aspects of the Plan between all the players including the library.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that everyone who has been building silos and doing their own thing needs to give that up because any of the plans being developed have the common goal of improving the town. There will need to be compromises and it doesn't matter who came up with the plan but everyone needs to buy in and discuss the details to reach the common goal.

7. ANY BUSINESS PROPER TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Ms. Lloyd commented that \$500 had been given to Tom Goddu to prepare the QR codes on the trails. No update has been received. Ms. Lloyd would like the Vice Chairman to request an update on this project by June 8th or return of the funds.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Krimmel, to have the Vice Chairman request an update on this project from Mr. Goddu by June 8th or have him return the funds. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Burdick commented that he has been in contact with the new pub owners opening in the Hurley building and would like everyone to support the new business with a soft opening set tentatively for July 1.

8. BUDGET BALANCE - \$10,000

Mr. Bohan would like a regular agenda item with an update on the Commission budget.

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

Town Membership in local Marketing/Chamber organizations.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to adjourn at 8:38 PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Clerk**