

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015 – 7:00PM  
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Chairman David Childs, Bill Baxter, David Krimmel, Shelley Lloyd, Mark Russo, Alternate John Burdick.

**ABSENT:** Jim Brett, Cindy Donaldson, Donna LaPlante.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Bob Moore, Joe Toro, Polly Pobuda (7:25 pm).

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

Chairman David Childs called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. John Burdick was seated for Jim Brett.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:  
November 9, 2015 regular meeting.**

**MOTION** Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Russo, to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2015 regular meeting; unanimously approved. Mr. Burdick, Mr. Krimmel & Mr. Baxter abstained.

**3. SIGNS FOR LOCATING BUSINESSES**

Ms. Lloyd inquired why we do not have directional signs to locate businesses after she and her husband had difficulty finding the new Parrott Delaney Pub. She thought that EDC should arrange for signposts where the businesses purchase their own signs in a consistent style. Mr. Russo commented that this issue is something that the landlord would be responsible, in this case Mr. Hurley. Mr. Burdick mentioned that Jocelyn Ayers of the Northwest Hills Council of Government had prepared a grant for several towns to complete signage and Salisbury has some very nice signage as a result.

Mr. Baxter mentioned that he can stop in to Write Way signs to discuss a concept for signage consistency with the town theme and develop a proposal to bring to Planning & Zoning.

**4. FINALIZE QUESTIONNAIRE AND DETERMINE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Chairman Childs apologized that he has not been able to make any progress during the past month because of health issues. Ms. Lloyd commented that she had asked for changes to the questionnaire. Specifically she would like events to be included as reasons why people currently come to downtown.

Mr. Burdick commented that he is opposed to paying people \$2 to complete the survey. Ms. Lloyd clarified that it had been addressed at the last meeting.

Mr. Russo suggested that the existing businesses be asked to participate and send the questionnaire out to their email lists.

Ms. Lloyd suggested having the questionnaire with a drop box at the libraries and Mr. Baxter added that there could be a instructions to send to Town Hall. Ms. Lloyd also mentioned that the questionnaire could be created on the website as Ms. Ventre had done with voting for the Paint the Pavement designs.

## **5. DOWNTOWN CENTER COMMITTEE – EDC/CMSC**

Chairman Childs asked Mr. Burdick whether his committee has been assembled. Ms. Lloyd complimented Mr. Burdick on the list of potential members that had been presented at the last meeting. Mr. Burdick indicated that due to his injury on Election Day and the recovery from surgery he had not had an opportunity to proceed. He committed to assembling the committee by the next meeting.

## **6. BUDGET BALANCE**

Mr. Burdick commented that in addition to looking at how the funds will be spent this year, shouldn't this group be proposing a budget for next year to be submitted proactively as the town budget process is starting.

Ms. Lloyd questioned why the website maintenance fees are paid from the EDC budget.

Mr. Krimmel proposed that the sign company design general theme signs that do not name specific businesses but instead direct visitors to where the tree farms, organic farms, boating or fishing are located to assist visitors in locating the destinations. He envisions something where the specific signs are interchangeable depending upon the season i.e. skiing in winter, orchards in the summer and fall, farms in the spring and summer. Mr. Baxter will request a concept for general signs and the more specific designs.

Mr. Krimmel commented that this group is back to the same point 3 years ago when they decided to upgrade the website in an effort to attract visitors to town. If the objective is to attract visitors the signage is a good thing to do, but if the mission is to draw businesses to New Hartford we need to think bigger. Visitors alone will not expand the business tax base of New Hartford. The population of this town needs to increase in order for the business tax base to increase. The question becomes what do we want this town to be? Do we want it to be a bedroom community? A thriving metropolis or something else?

Mr. Burdick indicated that while he agrees with Mr. Krimmel, he believes there is a balance between visitor and resident growth. Ms. Lloyd cited examples of nearby towns that have grown their businesses. Mr. Burdick commented that the signage needs to be something that should be included in the budget. Mr. Baxter committed to returning next month with a proposal.

Mr. Burdick suggested that a proposed budget should include funds for the Rails to Trails grant proposals. Mr. Baxter agreed, but commented that some of the events such as the Fishing Derby should be run by the town. He would like to see the Rails to Trails project move forward. This Commission needs to step back from managing the details and instead develop strategy for the growth of the town and moving it forward with reasonable and rational economic development.

Mr. Burdick commented that there is a grant available that would pay for the feasibility study but the Town needs to complete that paperwork. This Commission should be focusing on the larger picture and establish a mission. Mr. Russo commented that perhaps an amount for a Grant Writer should be included in a proposed budget for 2016-2017.

## **7. FOLLOW-UP ON PENDING ITEMS FROM NOVEMBER**

Chairman Childs indicated that he is not going to run the Fishing Derby this year, Mr. Russo is going to do it. There is \$5,000 set aside from prior derby events. Mr. Russo will be forming a new committee for the Fishing Derby next month. The \$2,000 allocated from this year's EDC budget would be used to increase publicity for this year's Fishing Derby and improve the marketing.

Mr. Krimmel proposed a survey of all town residents on what they would like to see as the future of the town with return postage. He suggests a proposal of the cost to do so be included in the budget proposal.

Ms. Lloyd commented that justification of how the funds would be utilized should be supplied to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance in order to recover the funds that were cut from the EDC budget this year.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Toro asked whether the Commission should annually vote for a Chairman and Vice Chairman. Mr. Baxter asked that the Commission Clerk research the process for electing the Chairman and Vice Chairman and the process for moving up from Alternate to Full Member.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** Mr. Baxter, second Ms. Lloyd, to adjourn at 8:13 PM; unanimously approved.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre  
Commission Clerk**