

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT  
MONDAY, MAY 9, 2016 – 7:00PM  
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** David Krimmel, Lori LaMere, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd, Mark Russo; Robert Boyan (7:13 pm), Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre.

**ABSENT:** Jim Brett, Jack Casey, Cindy Donaldson, Alternates Bill Baxter, John Burdick

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Chris Sayer, Mary Ann Gunning,

Assistant Town Clerk and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre administered the oath of office to Lori LaMere and Robert Boyan for their newly appointed terms as Members.

Chairman Russo called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

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

No alternates were present to be seated.

**MOTION** Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Krimmel to address item 3 first on the agenda. Unanimously approved.

**3. VISIT FROM LOCAL BUSINESS – Brewery Legitimus – Chris Sayer**

Chairman Russo welcomed Chris Sayer who gave a brief background on his experience and his desire to open a brewery. He explained the concept behind his new business where patrons can bring their own food while enjoying his beverages.

Mr. Sayer believes that the Brewery Legitimus will complement wineries, other breweries and restaurants. He cited an experience from New Jersey where a similar business listed all local restaurants on their wall and encouraged their patrons to visit those local restaurants. Since patrons can bring in their own food to his brewery, they can work together.

Mr. Sayer noted that New Hartford does not have a very good reputation when looking for restaurants and activities available besides skiing and tubing. Chairman Russo commented that Mr. Sayer's ideas could be integrated with the New Hartford Business Council and develop a co-branding concept with local restaurants.

Ms. Lloyd asked what his time frame for opening will be. Mr. Sayer noted that State Licensing is the biggest hurdle, but they hope to open in June. Ms. Lloyd asked about the design of the taproom and whether they will be able to accommodate parties such as wedding receptions or showers. Mr. Sayer stated that they do plan to be able to host large parties. Mr. Sayer noted that individuals who come tubing do not typically come into New Hartford because they do not know what is here. He suggests having signage or a large map with trails and restaurants for them to look at as they are waiting.

Mr. Sayer noted that we have 2 wineries in town and his brewery is about to open. Additionally, he has heard that there is another winery planting in town. Ms. Lloyd noted that the town could create a passport program.

Mrs. LaPlante asked about his seating capacity. Mr. Sayer believes it is about 140 to 180 but needs to confirm with the Fire Marshal. Ms. Lloyd suggested that Mr. Sayer contact the local Arts Council. Chairman Russo noted that it would be nice if the neighboring storefront could be a rotating storefront where artists could rent for short term shows.

Mr. Krimmel asked about Mr. Sayer's experience in identifying his location and the reception from the town. Mr. Sayer indicated that his realtor found the Waring Building for him and the blank slate was very appealing. After looking at the space, he contacted First Selectman, Dan Jerram. Based on Mr. Jerram's experience with his parents' business, Mr. Sayer felt that he understood the issues related to his brewery business and everyone in town has been very welcoming.

Chairman Russo asked Mr. Sayer if they would be soliciting subscribers. Mr. Sayer indicated that they are looking into it and may start up a Mug Club. He has been researching the various groups that are in the area such as the skiers, the tubers, fishermen and bikers to best identify how to attract their interest. Mr. Sayer asked if there is a restaurant association in New Hartford. He has been asked to join the one in Canton. He noted that he will not be staying open past 8 pm most nights as he doesn't want to pull business away from the bars and restaurants in town. He noted that when you go to the Farmington River Tubing website and follow their links it doesn't advertise New Hartford.

Mary Ann Gunning commented that CTVisit.com is a site that is free for businesses to be listed whereas Farmington Valley Visitors Association and Western Connecticut Visitors Association charge businesses a considerable amount of money to join. Mr. Sayer commented that having signage at the tubing location where people are lined up with a map listing local businesses that they could visit. A similar board at Ski Sundown could accomplish the same things. His motivation in coming to the meeting tonight is to find a way to draw those patrons to his business and other restaurants in town.

**MOTION** Ms. Lloyd, second Mrs. LaPlante to next address the Litchfield Hills Triathlon update. Unanimously approved.

#### **4. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHALON UPDATE – JULY 17 – Mary Ann Gunning**

Chairman Russo recognized Mary Ann Gunning of Chapin Park Bed & Breakfast. She has been speaking with Josh at the Hartford Marathon and he indicated that residents along the route can have their sprinklers aimed toward the road and runners can choose whether they wish to get wet or not rather than having people spraying the runners.

There will be 13 prizes awarded and she is waiting until after the Business Council Comedy night as she did not want to overwhelm local businesses. Participants will have bid numbers so that any restaurants offering a discount can identify them by their bid numbers. Ms. Gunning has contacted the business council and they announced the triathlon at their last event. She has spoken with Deb at Blue Sky, Lori at Ski Sundown and Grady at UpCountry. Grady cannot offer discounts due to his vendor agreements, but will donate a prize. Ski Sundown will donate passes and may offer a big pasta dinner on Saturday night for the athletes. She plans to speak with all the businesses in town about offering discounts to participants.

If there will be a town newsletter, she would like to contribute a passage on the triathlon. Members commented that the communication line had been cut from the budget and there would not be a town newsletter. Ms. Lloyd suggested that she contact the schools to include the triathlon in the Friday Folder.

Mr. Krimmel inquired about the size of the event and the number of participants. Ms. Gunning explained that there are 250 – 350 athletes who may each bring a couple of people with them. A week prior, the Hartford Marathon sends a blast to all the participants with information about what the town offers for the visitors, including any discounts. She hopes to have all the residents along the route cheering on the participants so that they feel welcome.

Mr. Krimmel commended Ms. Gunning on the work that she has done so far. He suggests soliciting contributions from the businesses toward sending out a flyer to residents announcing the triathlon and encouraging them to support participants.

## **2. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS – Rob Boyan and Lori LaMere**

Chairman Russo welcomed Rob Boyan and he explained his background including a degree in planning and his current position with Merrill Lynch financial. He elaborated on his wife's family's history in town. He believes that a newsletter could be generated by volunteers at no cost to the town.

Chairman Russo welcomed Lori LaMere and she explained that she is a newly licensed realtor and is very excited about being involved in the EDC. She loves real estate and hopes to bring help to the businesses in town.

Chairman Russo reviewed the four areas of focus for the Commission at this time including Grand List Development, Rails to Trails, Marketing, Downtown Initiative. He proposed a New Member Orientation for Rob, Lori, David and Mark.

## **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

April 11, 2016 regular meeting

There were not sufficient members present to approve the minutes.

## 7. UPDATES FROM TASK FORCES

**Marketing** – Ms. Lloyd shared that it has been difficult for them to meet due to vacation schedules. They have been compiling lists of businesses and have identified 6 different business areas in town. They have identified flyers that used be printed and need to be recreated to drop into a packet to welcome visitors, new residents or potential businesses. It needs to be appealing.

Mr. Boyan commented that having paper copies in addition to electronic appeals to a broader audience. Chairman Russo asked Mr. Sayer if it would have been helpful to him if we had a media kit. Mr. Sayer responded that yes a media kit would have been helpful. He would like to see a consistent listing of restaurants and attractions posted in different areas around town.

**Downtown Initiative** – Mrs. LaPlante indicated that she needs to become more familiar with the individuals on John's list and perhaps work with the business council to identify participants who may not be residents. She noted that Ms. Lloyd mentioned different business areas in town and perhaps there needs to be a different focus for different areas. Mrs. LaPlante has been active in the Business Council for a number of years and believes that the Commission needs to identify areas where the Business Council could become more involved in the downtown initiative.

Mr. Sayer commented that he attended the Business Council event at the library and was surprised that he did not see some of the same faces here this evening. Chairman Russo indicated that part of the purpose of the downtown initiative was to integrate the efforts of the Business Council and the EDC.

**Rails to Trails** – No Report.

**Grand List Development** – Chairman Russo had a lengthy discussion with Chairman Butler of the WPCA and once he is ready, there will be a special meeting with a presentation from Chairman Butler on everything that they have going on right now, possibly in late June. He intends to invite Planning & Zoning and the Board of Selectmen.

## 6. SIGNAGE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Lloyd shared that the signage is delayed because the design does not comply with the current signage standards. Chairman Stoutenberg asked the Zoning Officer, Ruth Mulcahy to draft language to allow the sign design.

Mr. Baxter ordered 2 of the street signs for prototypes to be presented, but they were not ready for this evening. The cost of these is \$135 each without the pole and anchor. Ms. Lloyd indicated that Mr. Jerram had offered that the town crew could install those signs.

Ms. Lloyd would propose that 10 of the street signs be ordered and \$1,000 be allocated to purchase a second of the banner frames.

Chairman Russo would like to see true samples by next meeting, so Mr. Baxter needs to convey to Jeremy that samples be prepared. He would also like to see a list of potential categories to choose from and how many of each to be ordered.

Additionally, in the event that P&Z cannot make the changes to allow the banner signs, perhaps a kiosk design with the maps as suggested by Mr. Sayer could be proposed and ordered before the end of the fiscal year.

## **8. FISHING DERBY**

Chairman Russo indicated that banners arrived today and there is a "Register Here" banner at UpCountry. There are 65-70 friends signs around town which have been sold for \$20 each for residences and \$25 for businesses. Information sheet will be developed to include in the Friday folder.

## **9. CURRENT BUDGET BALANCE**

Chairman Russo indicated that the remaining balance this budget year is \$5,915 and next month those funds should be allocated.

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

Mr. Krimmel indicated that he has drafted possible by-laws for the Commission as per the prior discussion.

Mr. Krimmel will attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting and indicate that the Commission would like to coordinate communications for the non-profits in town and perhaps be able to coordinate events and disseminate it.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** Ms. Lloyd, second Mrs. LaPlante, to adjourn at 8:57 pm; unanimously approved.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre  
Commission Secretary**