

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Robert Boyan, Jack Casey (7:24pm), Cindy Donaldson, David Krimmel, Lori LaMere, Shelley Lloyd, Mark Russo; Alternate John Burdick; Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre.

ABSENT: Jim Brett, Donna LaPlante, Alternate Bill Baxter

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Mary Ann Gunning, Selectman Laura Garay

Chairman Russo called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Mr. Burdick was seated for Jim Brett.

2. VISIT FROM LOCAL BUSINESS – Paul Amenta – New Hartford Business Council

Chairman Russo noted that Mr. Amenta will be on the agenda in August.

3. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHLON UPDATE – JULY 17 – Mary Ann Gunning

Chairman Russo recognized Mary Ann Gunning of Chapin Park Bed & Breakfast. She noted that she had ordered the bananas from Marandino's and needs to know how to get the check. Chairman Russo indicated that she should contact Christine. Ms. Gunning has 9 businesses who are offering discounts to race participants. Additionally, 13 businesses have donated gift certificates or merchandise for prizes. The discounts and the donation of bananas have been listed on the Hartford Marathon website.

Additionally, Ms. Gunning noted the various locations where she has arranged for parking including Gresczyk Farms, Portobello's, Marandino's, Mainstream Canoe & Kayak, Chapin Park (Jeanine Building) and Town Hall. She noted that the minutes from the last meeting indicate that she stated people cannot park on Church Street due to Church services and she believes she stated people should not park on Church Street. Ms. Gunning has notified the churches whose patrons might experience delays due to the event. She has event posters placed around town.

Mr. Burdick and Ms. Lloyd thanked Ms. Gunning for all her work in preparing for this event. Mr. Krimmel also expressed appreciation for all the work that Ms. Gunning has done and suggested that when she contacts the newspaper for publicity on Friday to include information about the businesses who have contributed to the event.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

June 13, 2016 regular meeting

Secretary Ventre noted an error in the motion to approve the minutes of the May 9th meeting where the prior motion had been copied, but the date had not been changed. Additionally, she noted that Ms. Lloyd had included Chairman Russo in her list of individuals that she recognized for their contributions over the past year.

Approval of the minutes is postponed until next month due to insufficient members being present who attended that meeting.

5. BY-LAWS / MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Krimmel drafted a mission statement and a set of by-laws which he would like everyone to review. He extracted sections of the Planning & Zoning By-Laws that he thought would be appropriate for this Commission. At a future meeting this topic can be revisited and addressed after all members have an opportunity to review the documents he has prepared. Mr. Krimmel noted that he believes it is critical that all agendas have an opportunity for public comment. Ms. Lloyd agreed that public comment is important.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Krimmel noted that we frequently hear comments from residents that since the local paper has gone out of business they are not aware of events happening around town. He believes that an alternative to this would be that every Friday a calendar of events for the next week should be published via some medium. When he initially came up with this concept, the Board of Selectmen had funds in their budget for a newsletter and so he thought it important to include information from the various groups and non-profits.

Mr. Krimmel asked Secretary Ventre if the town website has the capability to do this. She indicated that the Around Town page already lists events and that other than last Friday she has sent that page out to e-subscribers every week. Additionally, the Town Calendar on the home page lists all town meetings scheduled for the month. Ms. Lloyd inquired if that calendar could be changed to appear in a weekly format. Mr. Casey commented that he would like to see that the process be streamlined and consolidated. Mr. Krimmel questioned whether the town should promote events at local businesses. He did not believe it appropriate and questioned how one would determine the order for listing events which occur on the same day. Secretary Ventre noted that she currently bases the order upon the start time of each event. In the unlikely case that multiple events have the same start time, the event that was submitted first is listed first on the Around Town page. Ms. Lloyd noted that as a resident she is not always aware of events around town but would like to be informed in case there is an event she would like to attend whether it is sponsored by a

business or a non-profit. Selectman Garay commented that she believes that anyone who signs up for the e-subscriber should receive all of the town e-blasts.

Chairman Russo noted that if the Commission could obtain a list of email addresses from the various non-profits or businesses, a mail chimp invitation could be sent giving those individuals the option to sign up.

Mr. Boyan inquired about the scale of sending the calendar that Mr. Krimmel has proposed and indicated that he could develop something that could handle a couple hundred subscribers, but not thousands. Mr. Casey indicated that he likes the idea of collecting email addresses. Ms. Lloyd noted that we cannot sign individuals up as e-subscribers, they need to subscribe themselves.

A question was raised about the manpower to assemble this information. A discussion ensued about the process for collecting the data and the level of participation by local businesses and non-profits on the social networking sites and the Around Town page.

7. BUSINESSES

Mr. Krimmel prepared a summary of businesses that we have in New Hartford from the reports he obtained from the Assessor. He noted that there are only a few businesses in town that hire multiple employees. Mr. Krimmel believes that New Hartford is a bedroom community, most residents either work for themselves or work outside of town. He stated that the mission of this commission should be realistic in determining who the Town should appeal to based upon this information. Mr. Boyan noted that the Secretary of State registers businesses not the Assessor. Ms. Lloyd questioned if we support businesses whose owner lives in town or those who are located in town. Mr. Casey noted that the wave of the future is to work remotely, so this list can be deceptive. Some individuals do not want help and are happy with how their business is currently marketed. Mr. Krimmel asked how we define economic development. He believes it is to increase our tax base. Mr. Casey agreed that increasing the grand list would accomplish that.

Mr. Krimmel referred back to the Mission Statement he distributed earlier and suggested that should be considered. Mr. Burdick mentioned that the library frequently assists these home-based businesses with access to a copy machine, fax machine or meeting rooms. Perhaps this Commission should consider how to assist these individuals. The input from the New Hartford Business Council might be beneficial in determining this. Hopefully, Mr. Amenta will be available next month.

8. SIGNAGE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Lloyd indicated that she had emailed suggested locations for the signs which have been delivered to Chairman Russo. Mr. Casey inquired if the locations could be identified tonight if the signs could be installed. Ms. Garay indicated that the locations of the signs would need to be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Krimmel noted that these are directional signs and this commission is not promoting specific businesses nor the locations of the trails. A discussion ensued about the placement of these signs. "Downtown" should be at the east and west approach on 44. "Skiing" on the corner of 44 and 219. "Fishing" along the Farmington River – one in the vicinity of Upcountry Sport Fishing and the other near Hurley. "Tubing" on the Canton line near the Welcome to New Hartford sign. "Kayaking" would be near the Town Hall once the boat launch is built. "Boating" at 219 and 44 pointed toward West Hill or at the corner of West Hill and Town Hill. "Winery" at 202 & 219 pointing each direction. For the 3 "Hiking" signs, Mr. Burdick recommended that the Commission ask Open Space which trails they would like to promote.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Donaldson to have 2 Farm signs made. *Unanimously approved.*

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Casey to have 2 Hiking signs made. *Unanimously approved.*

MOTION Ms. Donaldson, second Ms. Lloyd to have 3 Retail/Dining signs made. *Approved. One opposed.*

9. UPDATES FROM TASK FORCES

Rails to Trails – Selectman Garay noted that First Selectman Jerram met with DEEP today.

Marketing – Ms. Donaldson indicated that she will email the design for the pocket folders to be sent to the Commission. They have also been creating a template for sell sheets inside. Ms. Lloyd noted that the zip code bumper stickers have been ordered. The idea is to have a packet of information that can be handed to a person new to the town. Chairman Russo indicated that he did not sign off on the funding for the pocket folders or the bumper stickers because he was not certain the design would be completed so those items would not come out of the prior year budget.

Grand List Development – Chairman Russo indicated that he is still trying to arrange a meeting with Mr. Butler from WPCA and Planning & Zoning.

Downtown Initiative – No progress.

10. CURRENT BUDGET BALANCE

Ms. Lloyd commented that she was disturbed by the fact that funds were charged to EDC without a motion and approval by the Commission or even the Chairman. While the purpose was valid and worthwhile, it would have been appropriate to at least approach the Chairman.

Chairman Russo reviewed the proposed budget for the new fiscal year. Ms. Lloyd commented that it needed to be adjusted because the Commission's budget was reduced to \$11,000. The line allocated to the Fishing Derby should be removed. Eliminating the line for Rails to Trails would bring the balance below the new budget. The difference should be added to Printing Costs.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

No other business presented.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to adjourn at 8:54 pm; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Secretary**