

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd; Mark Russo; Alternates Bill Baxter and John Burdick; Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre.

ABSENT: Robert Boyan, Jim Brett, Jack Casey, Lori LaMere

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Janet Carlson, Ollie Carlson

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Mr. Burdick was seated for Mr. Brett and Mr. Baxter was seated for Mr. Boyan.

2. VISIT FROM Janet Carlson – 111 Group

Chairman Russo welcomed Janet Carlson and the Commission members introduced themselves. Ms. Carlson introduced herself and the 111 Group, describing their focus on healthcare, tourism and craft products/services.

In the summer of 2015, funded by a grant they updated the DiscoverNWCT and added social media links with a focus on eight towns. They are now creating original content and creating interactions on social media. Their goal is to grow this program to include the 21 towns of the NHCOG. She is asking for a contribution from each town of \$2,500. For those funds, the towns receive collaborative representation on the DiscoverNWCT site. The banner changes seasonally and she and her staff go around to the towns for information on events and such to be promoted.

Ms. Carlson provided traffic statistics on visitors to the DiscoverNWCT website and described how they have integrated with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. She also explained how they have focused on itineraries for special interests such as vineyards, breweries, cycling or running.

Chairman Russo commented that he believes that this would be important if all Commission members agree. He inquired if Ms. Carlson would be agreeable to billing half a cycle for January and then bill the full year in the next fiscal year in July. Ms. Lloyd noted that this Commission needs to carefully analyze how funds are spent for regional advertising and promotion. Chairman Russo stated that moving forward he would like to see our town develop a cohesive branding message for the town.

After Ms. Carlson departed, Commission members discussed her presentation. Ms. Lloyd questioned how much information must be provided in order to get started. Mr. Krimmel would like to hear from the Selectmen of the 8 towns that participated in the grant process on how they believe the site worked for them. Mr. Burdick will follow-up with Ms. Carlson and the towns involved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

November 14, 2016 regular meeting

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2016 regular meeting. *Unanimously approved.* Mr. Baxter abstained.

4. FISHING DERBY UPDATE

Chairman Russo shared that Mrs. Childs felt that the Fishing Derby should be a town event as those were Mr. Childs' wishes. As a result, he and other members of the 2016 committee have resigned, the non-profit will be dissolved and the responsibility will be turned over to the town. Next year's derby will be run by the Town's Recreation Department.

5. SKI SUNDOWN DRAFT

Chairman Russo presented the letter he had drafted to support the Ski Sundown proposal. Mr. Burdick noted an error in the first sentence regarding the source of the water. Mr. Krimmel noted that he especially liked the second paragraph. Mr. Baxter suggested that the Board of Selectmen be copied on the letter.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to approve the letter presented as amended with copies to the Board of Selectmen to be sent in support of Ski Sundown. *Unanimously approved.*

6. SIGNAGE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Chairman Russo asked for an update on the signage committee. Mr. Baxter commented that he is frustrated that the signs still remain in the office instead of being installed. Ms. Lloyd expressed her frustration about the missing signs.

Mr. Baxter shared that he has discussed the banners with Ruth because they are outside the regulations. She has expressed that the Town should not promote something that is outside the regulations and therefore he would recommend that the banners be tabled. Mr. Burdick noted that the Commission had reached the same conclusion last month.

7. RAILS TO TRAILS UPDATE

Mr. Baxter shared that Milone and McBroom will be sharing their findings on the segment east of Marandino's. He and Mr. Brett have agreed that they do not want to abandon the trestle over the gorge, so they are looking to consider options which may be presented to the townspeople.

They also completed a Community Connectivity program on sidewalk safety to determine ways to connect from downtown to Marandino's and those options should come in before the end of the month.

8. ZIP CODE STICKERS / LIGHT NEW HARTFORD GIVEAWAY

Mr. Burdick shared samples of the flashlights that were handed out at Light New Hartford. All 450 were distributed within 40 minutes. The Business Council is vetting the distribution of the remaining green ones through local sponsors and at local events.

Mr. Burdick believes that the zip code stickers would cost approximately .50 each. Chairman Russo inquired if the Business Council might be willing to cost share to be able to distribute to their customers.

9. MANUFACTURING WALK-THROUGH

Chairman Russo mentioned that he and Mr. Krimmel met with First Selectman Jerram and part of their discussion revolved around manufacturing businesses. Mr. Jerram suggested that the Economic Development Commission as a group should schedule a walk-through of the manufacturing businesses located in town. Chairman Russo indicated that he would expect that it to be a 3 hour event with several businesses in 45 minute sessions possibly occurring on a Saturday. Chairman Russo will advise First Selectman Jerram that the Commission is interested in scheduling such visits.

10. CURRENT BUDGET BALANCE

The budget summary was passed around. Members discussed the funds remaining in this year's budget.

11. MEDIA KIT / MARKETING / BRANDING

Chairman Russo shared that he and Mr. Krimmel met to discuss the media kit and believe that a single generic folder should be developed and then have various inserts for different purposes. Mr. Krimmel noted that there would be a version for tourists, one for new businesses and one as a welcome to new residents. He suggests different categories for each version. Mr. Krimmel passed around suggested contents for the kits and would like members to review for discussion at the next meeting. If the inserts could be developed internally, there would not be a need to hire anyone.

Mrs. LaPlante shared that she had received a quote from Goulet for \$1300 for 1000 folders – full color inside and out with the pockets. The company that had offered to set up the folders for us would charge local businesses \$425 for inside ads and \$325 for ads on the back of the folder for a total of \$4,300. Chairman Russo mentioned that part of their discussion with First Selectman Jerram related to A Town For All

Seasons.com and the fact that it should not be a town entity. Ms. Lloyd noted that the town cannot sell advertising. Mr. Burdick mentioned that he has a contact at Connecticut Main Street who could provide information on the public/private venture. Ms. Lloyd noted that this Commission needs to focus on the content of the packets. Perhaps the Business Council could deal with the production of the folder itself. Mr. Burdick commented that the branding needs to be consistent in font and other features. Commission members discussed the town letterhead and how it could serve as the brand logo for the town. The brand logo needs to be something that is memorable so that when one sees it they think – oh that's New Hartford. Mrs. LaPlante noted that the letterhead was designed to incorporate the town theme, but we need the town brand to be capable of being integrated into anything and once established the letterhead could be modified to reflect the brand. Chairman Russo noted that the logo needs to look great in a single color and then look phenomenal in multi-color. Mrs. LaPlante inquired if all agreed that the seasons should be represented by a flower, a sun, a leaf and a snowflake. Mr. Baxter suggested that the First Selectman should be advised that the Commission would like to develop a consistent program. Mr. Kimmel noted that when the media kit is presented, it should be noted that we would like to develop a logo that can be incorporated in coffee mugs, t-shirts, etc. Chairman Russo commented that we need to attract more of the younger demographic to the town and so the logo needs to speak to that demographic.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Mr. Burdick passed around an email about the NWCT Economic Development Summit 2017 on Monday, January 30th. The email will be forwarded to all members so they may follow the links.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Baxter, second Mr. Burdick, to adjourn at 8:55 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Secretary**