

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2017 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Robert Boyan, Jim Brett (7:02 pm), Jack Casey, David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante (7:03 pm), Shelley Lloyd; Mark Russo; and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre.

ABSENT: Lori LaMere, Alternates Bill Baxter, John Burdick

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Vice Chairman Krimmel called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

No Alternates were present to be seated

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice Chairman Krimmel noted that no members of the public were present.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

January 9, 2017 regular meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Boyan, to defer approval of the minutes of the January 9, 2017 regular meeting due to insufficient members present..
Unanimously approved.

4. UPDATE – DISCOVERNWCT – John Burdick

Item postponed as Mr. Burdick was not present.

5. SIGNAGE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Lloyd indicated that there is nothing new to report. The missing six signs have been reordered, but have not been delivered as yet.

6. RAILS TO TRAILS UPDATE

Mr. Brett indicated that the next step after establishing the route is to identify a funding strategy and a grant writer. Cost estimates for the trail would be in the range of 6 – 7 million dollars and typically 80% could be funded by grants. The trail should be

identified as a multi-use trail to qualify for more funding opportunities. A communication program needs to be established to share with other Boards and Commissions the progress so far and the benefits of the proposal.

Vice Chairman Krimmel inquired when the timing would be right to begin to share the trail plans with the public and other Commissions. Mr. Brett indicated that the complete route needs to be established (which is the deliverable of the road safety survey) and a core consensus of the funding strategy.

Mr. Boyan inquired if a campaign should be made to fund a grant writer to benefit other projects in addition to Rails to Trails. Mr. Russo indicated that the capital plan has funds allocated for this project for the next several years to fund studies or whatever is needed.

The Committee will reconvene when the results of the Road Safety Study are received. Mr. Krimmel noted that the Committee needs feedback from the other Boards and Commissions to determine if there is support for the project among the residents. Mr. Brett will prepare his presentation for review by this commission for feedback.

Mrs. LaPlante noted that while the individuals who care about economic development in the town are in the minority, the sell points of the trail that will appeal to the majority of residents is improving the quality of life, increasing property values, attracting young families, etc. Mr. Boyan suggested including statistics from other towns of the positive outcomes of their trails.

7. CURRENT BUDGET BALANCE

The budget summary was passed around. Secretary Ventre shared an invoice from CEDAS. Members questioned what benefits the town receives for the membership funds.

MOTION Mr. Brett, second Mr. Russo, to not renew membership in CEDAS. *Unanimously approved.*

MOTION Mr. Krimmel, second Mr. Casey, to have Mr. Boyan investigate options for alternative website hosting. *Unanimously approved.*

Mr. Boyan noted that there are options for website hosting using Drupal which could cost half what we are paying now. The current website could be imported as is, however it would be hosting only and there would not be support for changes to the format. He will review options and present at the next meeting.

8. MEDIA KIT / MARKETING / BRANDING

Ms. Lloyd requested that the artwork submitted by Cindy be circulated to everyone. Mr. Krimmel asked that the committee present the contents of one piece of the media kit. Ms. Lloyd indicated that she needs help. Mr. Krimmel and Mr. Casey will join this committee.

Mr. Krimmel indicated that he tested the water in the First Selectman's office on the branding of the town and was told that we have "A Town for All Seasons" and no funding would be provided to change that. Mr. Casey noted that we already have a branding. Mr. Russo noted that we do not have a branding campaign. Mr. Russo noted that the signs, the stationery, the flashlights and the website are all part of the branding. Ms. Lloyd noted that there needs to be consistency so that it is recognized as New Hartford. Mr. Boyan noted that the image on the flashlight is different from the banners and the letterhead. Mr. Russo clarified that a business case needs to be developed for a graphic design person to create the consistency in the message.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Ms. Lloyd shared information about the Economic Development Summit hosted by the NHCOG. She noted that we are on the same page as the other towns in our Council.

Mr. Brett shared thoughts about an anchor event such as the Gilmore Girls event in Washington. The Fishing Derby could be expanded to a Riverfest that incorporates many local businesses and activities. Mr. Casey proposed that at the next meeting there should be a discussion of a possible signature event for New Hartford. Mr. Boyan noted that orchestrating an event cannot always happen, sometimes it just falls into place.

Mr. Krimmel suggested that the old and decrepit fabric banners be replaced. He suggests a proposal to the Board of Selectmen requesting funds for 20 banners. He believes the cost to be approximately \$1,200. Mr. Casey noted that he likes the idea, but the imagery should be changed to support the branding. Mr. Russo indicated he would like to have the branding images established before replacing the banners. Mrs. LaPlante suggested that the branding concept needs to be agreed at this table and all items should be steered in that direction. Mr. Boyan inquired if the town could absorb the web costs in exchange for the Commission budget funding the banners. A discussion continued about what should appear on the banners. Farms could be the image for the summer, skiing for winter, fishing for spring and hiking for fall. Mr. Brett and Mr. Russo expressed that the motto of A Town for All Seasons should appear on the banners. Ms. Lloyd noted that all the banners would need to be replaced rather than just some of them. Mr. Boyan will develop a potential design for the next meeting.

Mr. Russo shared that he had heard from Jean Cronauer asking for the Commission's support of the Butler Property development rights acquisition. She would like to present to this Commission next month.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Casey, to adjourn at 8:21 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Secretary**