

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2017 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Jim Brett, Mary Ann Gunning, David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Lori LaMere, Shelley Lloyd, Mark Russo; Alternates John Burdick and Midge Langston and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre.

ABSENT: Jack Casey, Alternate Bill Baxter

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Laura Garay, Kathryn Boughton (7:24 pm).

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Mr. Burdick was seated for Mr. Casey.

2. WELCOME NEW ALTERNATE MEMBER – Margaret (Midge) Langston

Chairman Russo noted that Commission Member Rob Boyan had resigned due to a job change which did not permit him to continue serving on the Commission.

Chairman Russo welcomed new Alternate Member, Midge Langston recently appointed by the Board of Selectmen and invited her to share her background. Ms. Langston has a BS in Finance with a minor in Economics. She has worked for Aetna in their Financial Division, has done some graduate work with Renselear and is now retired. She is a fifteen year resident of New Hartford.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

January 9, 2017 regular meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr Krimmel, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2017 special meeting. *Unanimously approved.* Mr. Brett, Mr. Casey, Ms. Gunning, Ms. LaPlante and Ms. Langston abstained.

May 8, 2017 regular meeting

MOTION Mr. Krimmel, second Ms. Gunning, to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2017 regular meeting. *Unanimously approved.* Mr. Brett, Mr. Casey, Ms. Lloyd, Mr. Burdick and Ms. Langston abstained.

4. UPDATE – Litchfield Hills Triathlon – Mary Ann Gunning

Ms. Gunning shared that there seems to be more enthusiasm in the town this year about the upcoming Triathlon this weekend. She listed the businesses offering discounts and those who have donated prizes. There have been some discussions about whether to award the prizes to the top winners in each category or whether to put all the prizes into a raffle with bib numbers drawn in a gift raffle. The Recreation Department will be preparing a large poster listing all the discounts available and a second poster listing who donated prizes.

The Hartford Marathon group will be sending a blast to the attendees a couple days prior to the event listing the discounts which will be available and has listed local restaurants under their favorite places on their website. Ms. Gunning asked for members to take Triathlon posters to be posted around town. First Selectman Jerram confirmed that he will be putting out the signs to welcome the athletes.

Chairman Russo inquired if the Hartford Marathon Group would co-op a banner across the road a couple weeks prior to the event. Ms. Gunning noted that if we are going to do banners we should really consider doing them for all the events in town. Mr. Krimmel inquired who produced the posters and Ms. Gunning noted that they were prepared by the Hartford Marathon Group for free. Mr. Krimmel noted that he would like to commend Ms. Gunning and all the effort she put in coordinating this event.

Ms. Gunning also added that she would like to make a comment on a different topic. She noted that she had 3 rooms filled this past weekend with people attending the balloon festival in Goshen. She mentioned that CTVisit.com will promote events and she would like to invite the Director to meet with EDC and the Business Council to get more local businesses onto the free site perhaps in September. Ms. Lloyd inquired about whether they could be invited to one of the Business Council events. Chairman Russo and Mr. Brett suggested that the meeting could be scheduled up in the Senior Center with Business Council Members and any interested members of the town boards and commissions. Ms. Lloyd added that any organization that does events should also be invited such as churches, libraries, and other organizations.

Mr. Burdick commented that he believes the DiscoverNWCT project may not be funded through the NWCOG due to the budget uncertainties. Mr. Jerram concurred stating that there have been requests for endorsement from multiple groups whose funding has been cut.

Mr. Burdick inquired if the town could link into CTVisit with the Around Town blast that is sent from the town by Secretary Ventre. Ms. Gunning indicated that would be a question for CTVisit. She noted that the speaker will educate about the revenue possible from tourism. Mr. Brett agreed that the state began promoting tourism with their Still Revolutionary campaign and he believes that EDC could promote getting local businesses promoted on that site.

Mr. Brett noted that another site to check out is UnlockingLitchfield.com. He described the benefits of that site and would like to invite them to a meeting perhaps over the winter.

Ms. Lloyd noted that everyone should develop a list of representatives from local groups that put on events and send it to Secretary Ventre in order to compile a list of those to be invited. Ms. Gunning indicated that she will contact Randy to identify potential dates at the end of September or early October.

5. 2017-2018 BUDGET DISCUSSION – FIXED COSTS AND EDC’S ROLE

Secretary Ventre passed around copies of the prior year’s budget report and an estimate listing projected expenses for the new fiscal year.

Ms. Lloyd inquired about the expenditure in the last fiscal year for the banners and whether the remaining balance in the EDC account would cover that. Mr. Jerram indicated that the costs were actually higher with some licensing fees for the photos. He explained that words New Hartford were washed out in some of the backgrounds so alternate selections would be needed.

Chairman Russo noted that Ski Sundown had agreed to provide 5 photos from which 2 could be selected with no licensing fees required. Mr. Jerram commented that he has reviewed istock photo to identify photographs and it is hard to visualize what they would look like at 50 miles per hour.

Ms. Lloyd questioned if someone could contact Jack Casey to see if he has kayaking pictures that could be used. Ms. Gunning noted that the tubing company probably has some great photos that could be used. Mr. Jerram offered to contact the tubing company.

Mr. Brett inquired about the next step. Chairman Russo indicated that photos need to be selected and submitted to the Selectmen for approval to finalize the order.

Chairman Russo asked all to direct their attention to the last page of the budget handout. He asked First Selectman Jerram where the New England Real Estate advertisement stands. Mr. Jerram indicated that he has crafted an article and submitted it today.

Chairman Russo noted that with recurring expenditures, the advertisement expense, and the 06057 decals the remaining funds are \$640 for the next fiscal year depending upon the outcome of the budget. It was suggested that the EDC could form a non-profit foundation and seek donations from the private sector to supplement budget funds and enable the Commission to move forward with projects that had been planned. Mr. Burdick noted that would be a public/private coalition. Chairman Russo indicated the topic could be introduced at the CTVisit meeting in the fall and gauge feedback from attendees.

Mr. Burdick noted that there had been previous discussions about partnering with neighboring towns. He suggested that the Chairman of the Canton EDC would consider partnership and could be invited to a future meeting.

Mr. Krimmel questioned what we are trying to accomplish. We are seeking to increase revenue to the town. What are we going to do to increase the revenue to the Town of New Hartford? Businesses need to come here or expand and/or people need to want to live here. We don't want to decrease the revenue by not offering places for elderly to live or by people leaving because of being overtaxed. What can be done to keep the people who live here staying here?

He believes that the media kit should be ready to go when the EDC receives funding. Ms. Lloyd noted that she had mentioned in a prior meeting that the media kit should be put on hold in favor of ordering the banners.

A discussion ensued highlighting progress that has been made by the EDC toward the goals of creating a brand for the town as well as the development that has been happening in town over the past couple of years.

Mr. Burdick inquired about the remaining funds in the reduced EDC budget. Mr. Jerram indicated that if presented with a worthy project, the Selectmen would consider potentially funding it if they have the flexibility to do so depending upon what happens with the State budget. He noted that the banner project started this past fiscal year is something that should also be finished in the coming year. Chairman Russo noted that once the first batch of banners is up, the additional banners can be made with support and sponsorship of local businesses.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Mr. Jerram asked that everyone stay positive on the budget process.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. LaPlante, to adjourn at 8:40 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Secretary**