

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2014 – 7:00PM  
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL – SESSIONS CONFERENCE ROOM**

**PRESENT:** Chairman David Childs, Jim Brett, Donna LaPlante (arrived at 7:03), Shelley Lloyd, Mark Russo; Alternates John Burdick (arrived at 7:03), Cindy Donaldson; First Selectman Dan Jerram

**ABSENT:** Bill Baxter, Bill Bohan, David Krimmel, Bob Switzgable; Alternate Lynn Charest.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Bob Moore, Steve Sadlowski, Zoning Officer, Bill Michaud, Chairman and Denton Butler & Mary Beth Greenwood members of Water Pollution Control Authority; Stephen Tuxbury & Reggie Smith, members of Board of Finance; Joe Toro; Troy LaMere; Dan LaPlante (arrived at 7:03); Jim Steadman, Chairman of Planning & Zoning Commission (arrived at 7:18); Kurt Moffett (arrived at 7:27).

**1. Reports from the four Boards and Commissions on their plans and projects for this fiscal year:**

Chairman David Childs called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He thanked the members of other boards and commissions for coming to share plans for this fiscal year.

Chairman Childs explained that EDC has established 3 subcommittees to help existing businesses; expand the local economy; and enhance New Hartford's character and quality of life.

In cooperation with the Selectman's office, the EDC has been improving the Town website and would like to have a calendar of overall events in the town. They would also like to implement directional signs through the zoning department. Steve clarified that the Zoning Regulations need to be amended and then a design template created. EDC is also working with Tom Goddu on the technology aspect of the hiking trails and working on the Rails to Trails project. EDC would like to open up the river so it is more visible and work to reduce the invasive plantings. Ms. Lloyd mentioned that Ms. Donaldson has made significant efforts in the last month in creating a social media presence within the town including the Facebook page where we are hoping to get 1000 likes.

Chairman Childs invited the Board of Finance representatives to speak. Reggie Smith mentioned that out of the surplus, the school security project has been funded and the special education cost overrun. Funds were drawn for the Maple Hollow Bridge. 13.5% of current budget is in surplus which is within the range required by the state. Projects planned are the Ann Antolini School roof, windows and possibly some additional ADA requirements. Mr. Jerram indicated that at the last BOS meeting, they had discussed the building project that had been planned prior to the Sandy Hook incident and which items needed to be prioritized. Mr. Butler clarified that there would likely be a discussion at the next Board of Finance meeting to keep them informed of

the scope of the project. Mr. Jerram added that the school project was only a portion of the discussion at their meeting. There were additional discussions about the Carpenter Road bridge, downtown redevelopment including the Griffin property and the WPCA funding and expansion. The plans for the school renovations had been held back until the Bakerville bonding had been paid off. The debt service for the Town Hall renovation and river views would be paid off in about 5 years and at that time additional bonding projects could replace those payments without increasing taxes. Mr. Smith added that the State had approved funding for 47% of the Carpenter River bridge project.

Mr. Michaud introduced himself and the other members present of the WPCA. He thanked the Commission for the invitation this evening. He believes this was an important step because the water and sewer rates in town are high and the ability to develop the downtown area is closely related to those rates. Economic development will help to bring the water and sewer rates down and in turn the lower rates will make the town a more favorable destination for new businesses and enable current business owners to be able to sell their business if desired. He indicated that the rates are based upon the costs of operation and the way to bring those rates down is to have more users where the cost may be shared. They would like to see new developers in the area of the planned water/sewer system be required to pay to extend the line to tie into the existing water and sewer system. WPCA had a recent emergency repair in the downtown area. They have been working on a policy for the 38 properties that abut the sewer line that have not connected. The cost to a property owner is \$8,000 - \$15,000 to connect which can be a significant hardship. WPCA has been looking into a revolving loan program to help property owners to fund the connection fees. The recent emergency has raised awareness of the age of the pipes in the sewer system and they are implementing a camera inspection project to check the condition of the pipes. They have a funding proposal available for \$3.7 million which is about 25% grant and the remainder a loan to expand the system. WPCA is also looking into funding that would be available if pipe remediation is needed. A strong policy with the requirement for developments to tie in would help the town economically and would help the WPCA to get on its feet. At that point where the rates become more reasonable the water/sewer system could become an asset to the town. Ms. Lloyd questioned the numbers of how many users would be needed to be added to make the system viable. Chairman Childs asked Mr. Michaud how he feels about the Hurley proposal for development on the sewer line. Mr. Michaud commented that he believes the high density proposal would be an asset to the system and would add vitality to the downtown area. Mrs. LaPlante commented that she was very glad that Mr. Michaud raised the point about the policy. After hearing Mr. Hurley's presentation to Planning and Zoning about building 200 units where many seemed opposed and then discussions this evening about 100 units that seemed feasible and agreeable to most; she felt that one has to bear in mind that the development has to be profitable for the developer and one has to realize that limiting a development to a lower number of units may cancel the project. Ms. Lloyd expressed agreement with Mrs. LaPlante that there does need to be a policy applied across all the Commissions that all can support. Ms. Donaldson inquired about the size of the proposed units. Mr. Jerram clarified that the size of the units had not been detailed as yet. This is the first development

proposal in a long time and there are many aspects to this project that could represent such a positive impact for both the water/sewer system and the downtown area.

Chairman Childs asked Mr. Steadman about the outcome of the meeting with Mr. Hurley earlier today. Mr. Steadman indicated that the meeting went very well and if the project goes forward it would definitely be a positive outcome for the town. Planning & Zoning did agree to hear a proposal for a zone change for a restaurant in the former Ovation building which will be discussed at an upcoming public hearing. Planning & Zoning will work closely to be sure the project fits well with the town yet work to assist the developer in moving forward.

Ms. Donaldson inquired about the proposed zone change for the former Hoffman Hardware Building. Mr. Steadman indicated that the change had been approved. Mr. Jerram clarified that significant renovations would not likely be completed until there is a tenant pending. Mr. Brett commented that the Rails to Trails project intends to have the trail run along the river as Collinsville does and would like to see that the developer is aware of those plans.

Mr. Russo asked Mr. Michaud about an earlier comment that a developer who extends the sewer line being able to charge back to the property owners enroute to recapture some of the costs of extending the line. Mr. Russo wondered if the same ability to recapture costs would apply to the town. Mr. Michaud clarified that it would be possible, but the benefit assessment is limited to the added value to the property owner which would not be the full cost of the expense. Mr. Jerram clarified that some of the dynamic could be changed by working with Planning & Zoning to change the number of units permitted. Mr. Butler added details to Ms. Lloyd's question that there are 208 sewer users, one of whom is River Run with 120 units. He also clarified that the available funding is earmarked for a Cottage Street or Pine Meadow expansion and cannot be transferred to other projects. The emergency repair was \$50,000 and was really not a permanent fix. The WPCA has looked into a low interest loan from the State which is only available if the existing pipes cannot be lined to repair them. If the pipes can be lined, the funding is not available because that is considered maintenance. The lines must be assessed prior to adding more users to ensure that additional volume does not cause the existing system to collapse.

Chairman Childs asked Mr. Steadman if there is anything he would like to add. Mr. Steadman mentioned that Planning & Zoning is working on their Plan of Conservation and Development which needs to be done in 2015. The Commission will be asking for input from other Commissions on their plans for the direction of the town. The Commission is always in favor of assisting projects that are able to connect to the water/sewer system.

Mr. Toro inquired if the Town garage would impact Mr. Hurley's proposal. Mr. Steadman indicated that a public hearing has not yet been set and therefore he is limited in what he can discuss. He believes that Mr. Hurley would like to include the town garage property in his proposal if the garage can be relocated. Mr. Jerram clarified that he has had discussions with Mr. Hurley and if his plan would include that

property and he and the Board of Selectmen are better able to approach the other Boards and Commissions as well as the town residents with a specific proposal.

Mr. Jerram asked to update the Commission on developments and upcoming projects. A company has offered to present to the town a proposal for QR coding and documenting our historical trails. Mr. Jerram can schedule a presentation with the company and the Commission if desired. The new motto of "A Town for All Seasons" has been implemented and hopefully installed. The next phase will be to determine how to implement the motto in the town letterhead. There are plans to make some improvements for the walking trails. A proposal will be submitted to Planning and Zoning Commission. The Board of Selectman would like to have a fall concert series riverside in the downtown area at the end of Bridge Street. Steve has been consulting with the Board on what can be done to open up some views of the river.

Mr. Jerram also indicated that the Art League would like to have a street art competition with several palettes around the village center to be completed by the winners. This would be a wonderful opportunity to generate interest and draw people downtown. The library will also be announcing some efforts to become more of a cultural center for matching funds they are eligible to receive.

The Board of Selectman would also like to update the Vision and Action Plan that was developed in the 90's to see what people would like to see in the downtown area. A lot of the concepts that were brought up at that time are still applicable.

Ms. Donaldson questioned if the Plan of Conservation and Development would be developed with input from the various departments and commissions. Mr. Steadman agreed that they would welcome input and that there would be plenty of opportunity for that. Mr. Burdick questioned if the Plan is being developed by an outside firm or in-house. Mr. Steadman indicated that at some point an outside firm might be used to finalize the plan, but a great deal of the work is being done in house. Ms. Donaldson asked what the deadline for completion is. Mr. Steadman and Steve indicated that it needs to be completed by June, 2015. Ms. Donaldson commented that the EDC needs to get their recommendations together this calendar year in order to meet that timeline.

At 8:08, Mr. Childs thanked all the guests for coming and indicated that the regular meeting would begin. The guests are welcome to remain or could depart as they wished.

The members of the Commission discussed the proposed town purchase of the Griffin property and a consensus was reached that the Commission does not have enough information about the intended use of the property to make a decision on whether to support the purchase.

**4. Update on Activities.**

Ms. Lloyd explained that she had investigated the proposal to post the Assessor's list of businesses on the website. After discussions with the Assessor and Town Clerk, she understands their position that many of the home based businesses may not want to have their information published. The Commission will continue to post information for town businesses who ask to be listed on the website. She will send the information on the Artisans to the Town Clerk's office to be loaded onto the town website. She clarified that the artisans have provided the contact information that works best for them and we should not force them to all provide consistent contact information, but rather work with what they have provided; therefore some may have telephone numbers whereas others may only have email contact information and all may not have a website.

**5. Any other business proper to come before the commission.**

Mr. Toro asked if the EDC will have a booth at New Hartford Day. He commented that an EDC booth would be a great avenue to reach the residents. The Commission members present briefly discussed supporting this idea and determined that more detailed plans would be prepared at the next meeting. Mr. Toro volunteered to work in the booth on September 21, 2014.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Donaldson, to adjourn at 8:30 PM; unanimously approved.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre  
Commission Clerk**