

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2014 – 7:00PM  
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL – SESSIONS CONFERENCE ROOM**

**PRESENT:** Chairman David Childs, Bill Bohan, David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd; Mark Russo, Bob Switzgable; Alternate John Burdick

**ABSENT:** Bill Baxter, Jim Brett, Alternates Cindy Donaldson and Lynn Charest.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Karen Meares

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.**

Chairman David Childs called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

**2. PRESENTATION BY NEW HARTFORD ART LEAGUE**

Karen Meares presented information on the “Paint the Pavement” project that has been done throughout the country. Initially, the thought was to create a project on the parking lot in front of Torrington Savings Bank but it could easily be expanded to other parking areas throughout the downtown area. Ms. Meares would like to see the program offered as a contest to promote the town theme of “A Town for All Seasons”.

Ms. Meares and the Art League are requesting the support of the Commission in developing a proposed budget and publicity funding to promote the contest.

Ms. Lloyd inquired about the timeframe that the Art League foresees for the first phase of this project. Ms. Meares replied that the hope is to launch the contest for proposed designs to be voted on over the winter with painting to take place in early Spring.

Mr. Krimmel indicated that he likes the idea of using the Town for All Seasons theme for the first project in front of Torrington Savings Bank and facing Route 44. He clarified that to start an advertising budget is needed and prize funds for each of the 4 quadrants of the initial design reflecting each season.

Ms. Lloyd commented that having aerial photos taken which could be printed and sold could be an additional benefit of the project.

Mrs. LaPlante inquired if the artists whose designs are selected would paint the actual image. Ms. Meares clarified that volunteers would assist in painting after the design is laid out. They envision involving Girl Scout troops, neighborhood groups etc. in the painting phase.

Mr. Krimmel clarified that Ms. Meares is seeking funding from the EDC to get this project started. Mr. Bohan inquired if there could be a follow-up campaign for t-shirts and postcards using the design.

Ms. Lloyd indicated that she believes this is a great idea and the Commission should support the project. Mr. Childs asked for a volunteer to work with the Art League on this project. When no one volunteered, Mr. Childs indicated that he would work with them on this project.

Mr. Krimmel suggested that the Art League visit all the Boards and Commissions in order to garner support before the project is launched.

Mr. Russo inquired about the timeframe for launching. It seems that info would start being circulated by December 1 with a January 1 announcement to artists and a February 1 deadline for submissions to be selected for painting in the Spring.

Mr. Bohan inquired if the Art League would maintain the drawings. Ms. Meares indicated that has not been determined as yet. Ms. Lloyd again stressed how much she likes the project and suggested a big launch event to draw a crowd to view the completed project.

Mr. Childs indicated that the Art League should establish a committee to get this project going. He will participate on the committee.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:  
August 11, 2014 regular meeting.**

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Mrs. Lloyd, to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2014 regular meeting; unanimously approved.

**July 14, 2014 regular meeting.**

**MOTION** Mr. Krimmel, second Mr. Russo, to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2014 regular meeting; unanimously approved. Ms. Lloyd abstained.

**4. REVIEW OF WEBSITE**

Mr. Krimmel reviewed the discussion from the July meeting and the advertisement that appeared in the Independent. The result of that advertisement was less than 5 businesses who contacted Town Hall to be added.

Mr. Krimmel inquired if we have a way to identify the number of visitors to the Town website. Ms. Ventre will check with the vendor to inquire about number of clicks per section. Ms. Donaldson has been promoting links to the Town website on social media.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that in her office we frequently refer callers to the website for information that is posted there and most people do not think to check the town website, perhaps because the old site did not provide as much information.

Mr. Krimmel questioned if businesses listed on the website should be limited to those located in New Hartford. All members agreed that only businesses who pay taxes in town should be listed.. Mrs. LaPlante asked for clarification as to whether a New Hartford resident with a business located outside of town could be listed and it was agreed that the business needed to be located in and a taxpayer in New Hartford.

Mr. Krimmel also commented that he had a task from the July meeting to establish a town calendar. He would like a volunteer from the Commission to assist with creating that calendar including specific dates for the events. He believes that the Commission needs to have criteria to determine which events are big enough that they should be promoted. Mrs. LaPlante indicated that she would work with Mr. Krimmel on the calendar.

Mr. Krimmel would like to see the calendar of events marketed and perhaps a professional would need to be hired to develop a marketing plan. Can the marketing of these events be promoted on the website? A discussion continued after Mr. Krimmel read a summary he would like to see on the front page of the website promoting the many activities available. Mr. Switzgable inquired whose phone number would be listed on that page. Mr. Krimmel suggested that the events would tie in well with the role of the Recreation Director. He would like to see the Recreation Director position as a full-time role.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that if Mr. Jerram would agree to make the responsibility of promoting these events a part of the Recreation Director's job, there would be the possibility in the future to increase that position to full-time. Mr. Russo suggested that publicity could be as simple as a press release for each of the events to ensure that the Hartford Courant and the other papers are notified. Press releases would also be a means to drive traffic to the website that could then snowball as visitors see other events they would like to attend.

Mrs. LaPlante suggested that once the calendar is assembled that the Commission could ask for assistance in publicizing the events through the Recreation department.

Mr. Bohan suggested that a calendar graphic be placed in the center of the Annual Events page with a link for current events.

## **5. NEW HARTFORD DAY**

**Farmington Valley Visitor's Association** – Mr. Childs commented that each month they publish a calendar of events that is distributed to the member towns. He believes it is a simple way to publicize town events.

Mr. Childs inquired who would be willing to staff a booth at New Hartford Day. Mrs. LaPlante clarified that the Commission has the ability to have a presence, but inquired what would be presented. Mrs. LaPlante and Mrs. Lloyd both indicated that they

would be there in addition to Mr. Childs. There was a brief discussion about having a slide show available as well as having the website available for people to view. Logistically, it was determined that without wi-fi available it would be difficult to allow people to view the website, so perhaps brochures such as the restaurants and the business council should be available.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS PROPER TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION.**

Mr. Childs commented that a town resident, Jeremy Schaller is an avid mountain biker and there is the potential for promoting mountain biking in the Nepaug area. Mr. Schaller needs to do some work on the trail but will be meeting with Mr. Childs in the future to work on mountain biking events. Mrs. LaPlante commented that if the environment is more welcoming to horses that those individuals will return to the Nepaug forest area.

Mr. Childs announced that the Mobil station is open again and that plans had been announced to rebuild in the Spring. Additionally, he is working on a potential tenant for the Waring Building. Mr. Burdick inquired about how large the fuel cell business is in that building.

Mr. Bohan indicated that he has been attempting to work with a representative at the Connecticut Department of Transportation despite scheduling difficulties. He and Mr. Brett met with Mr. Jerram to discuss assistance with the design phase of the Rails to Trails project. They discussed the proposed maps with Mr. Jerram and there may be some existing town right of ways that can be utilized for the trail.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that she saw a report that rated Connecticut towns on how "bike friendly" a town is. She wondered if the Department of Transportation would be amenable to the bike path running alongside Route 44. Mr. Bohan indicated that he had been told that Route 44 has been designated a greenway. Mrs. Lloyd described a bikeway in Ocean City, New Jersey where there is a designated lane for bicycles that is clearly marked.

Mr. Russo asked if there are any plans to interview individuals who have property for sale as to why they are leaving. Mrs. LaPlante commented that we are seeing properties turn over, but there are not a lot of families with young children moving in. Those over 60 are leaving due to the cost of living, many are moving south. A discussion continued about the dropping school enrollment and the possible uses of a school property that might need to be closed in the future. Mr. Krimmel believes that Mr. Russo's point is very significant and knowing those statistics is highly relevant in planning the future of this town. Mr. Bohan mentioned that the Connecticut Economic Resource Center website has those statistics.

**7. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** Mr. Bohan, second Mr. Burdick, to adjourn at 8:32 PM; unanimously approved.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre  
Commission Clerk**