

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2014 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL – SESSIONS CONFERENCE ROOM**

PRESENT: Chairman David Childs, Jim Brett, David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd; Mark Russo, Alternate John Burdick

ABSENT: Bill Baxter, Bill Bohan, Bob Switzgable; Alternate Cindy Donaldson .

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Chairman David Childs called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Mr. Burdick was seated for Bill Baxter.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
October 20, 2014 regular meeting.**

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Brett, to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2014 regular meeting; unanimously approved. Mr. Krimmel & Chairman Childs abstained.

3. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Krimmel, as a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission provided an overview of the work that has been done to update the 2005 Plan of Conservation and Development. The downfall of that plan is that although it was a good plan, there was no implementation timeframe and any pieces that were implemented were reactionary rather than proactive.

The Planning & Zoning Commission formed a subcommittee to review each section of the plan to identify which areas needed to be updated. They hired Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics to help with the demographic sections of the plan on an hourly basis, but a majority of the plan will be prepared by town residents. The Zoning Officer, Steve Sadlowski has asked for input from the various town Boards and Commissions on what they believe should be included in the Plan.

The Planning & Zoning Commission will review each section of the Plan and identify what they believe needs to be included and then each Board and Commission will inform them what they believe needs to be included in the Plan and the ensuing discussions will result in the final Plan document that is ultimately presented to the public.

The EDC has been asked to review Section 5 "Encourage Economic Development". Mr. Krimmel informed the Commission that at the time the Plan was drafted in 2005, there was a focus on limiting population growth in the town because of limited tax base. At that time the tax base was 88% residential and 12% business. There were

measures taken in that plan to increase the lot size and restrict building on slopes in order to limit the number of additional residences that could be added. Ten years later, residential development is slowing, the school population is decreasing and business tax base is shrinking. Mr. Krimmel read his proposed revisions to the sections to open the discussion. He would like to see planning to grow the town by capitalizing on the natural resources of the town. We now need to encourage population growth in order for existing businesses to survive. The tax base has now changed to 94.2% residential and 5.8% business. This loss in the business tax base is likely to continue based upon the business climate in the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Krimmel listed the items that he believes should be included as accomplishments of the Economic Development Commission to date including branding of "A Town for All Seasons" and establishing a user friendly town website.

Ms. Lloyd commented that in addition to the accomplishments listed by Mr. Krimmel, the EDC has established a town presence on social media to promote events within the town.

Mr. Krimmel would like to see a focus group established that meets periodically with members from various boards and commissions in order to foster communication between the boards and commissions to improve the business climate in town. He would also like to see a marketing plan established to encourage visitors to come to New Hartford.

Ms. Lloyd commented that she would like to see tax incentives to encourage business development in New Hartford. A discussion ensued about proposed abatements for the Hurley property and what had been done in the past or other towns. Mr. Krimmel commented that if tax incentives need to be included in the Plan of Conservation and Development perhaps a subcommittee needs to be created to work on language for the Plan. Mr. Burdick commented that the marketing plan should also encourage businesses to come to New Hartford. Mr. Krimmel summarized that no business survives without growth. So we need to grow the town in order to provide an opportunity for the businesses to grow. How do we develop an environment to encourage businesses or residents to move here? Ms. Lloyd commented that demographically New Hartford is not a welcoming place for young adults who have just graduated from college because of the cost of living and lack of activities. Additionally, retirees may not be able to remain here due to cost of housing and taxes.

Mr. Russo commented that mixed-use and multi-rate apartments are the type of housing that appeal to both of those groups. Nationally, there has been a return to urban residences. Mrs. LaPlante commented that 10 years ago those moving to New Hartford were looking for single family homes – typically 4 bedroom colonials. Now, as the need arises some individuals are building accessory apartments. She spoke with a resident recently who had built an accessory apartment for his in-laws but was now considering moving into the accessory apartment to allow his children to live in the original house. She believes that we are unique in that our zoning regulations permit the accessory apartments and home-based businesses. Marketing strengths would include being small business friendly. Ms. Lloyd agreed that doing business has

changed in those ten years as well because some individuals telecommute 1 or 2 days per week. There have been many changes in how people work now. Mr. Burdick suggested a heading for Home-Based businesses in the Plan. Ms. Lloyd suggested that proximity of the town be included in marketing.

Mr. Krimmel indicated that he would like to see the Economic Development Commission come to the Planning & Zoning Commission with a list of items to be included in the Plan of Conservation & Development.

The demographics and a copy of section 5 will be sent out for all members for review. A further discussion of proposed changes will occur at the meeting on December 8th. Mr. Brett suggested that each member bring their best 2 suggestions to the next meeting. Chairman Childs indicated that he will fine any members who do not submit suggestions to be included in the new Plan.

Mr. Brett inquired about the purpose of the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Burdick indicated it is a State mandate. Mr. Krimmel clarified that if something you wish to do is not included in the Plan of Conservation and Development, it is not possible to obtain state funds.

4. ADVERTISING FOR HOLIDAY EVENTS

Chairman Childs showed examples of the advertising that the Economic Development Commission funded last year promoting Light New Hartford and the Bakerville Holiday Festival.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mrs. LaPlante, to fund the ads again this year; unanimously approved.

5. UPDATES

A. Gazebo

Chairman Childs reviewed the discussion from the last meeting about the proposed pavilion along the river. The Boy Scouts will be completing the work discussed at the October meeting shortly.

B. Mountain Bikes

Chairman Childs met with Jeremy Schaller today and reviewed maps for a path to route bikers through town near the restaurants.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that the Tax Collector will be holding a tax sale and the town will be able to take a large parcel off Ramp Road for back taxes that will provide areas for parking to access the possible Rails to Trails area or mountain bike trails.

C. Street Paintings

Chairman Childs clarified that the Street Paintings have been approved by the Selectman and will start in the spring.

D. Town Calendar

No Update at this time

E. Former Waring Building

Chairman Childs did not have additional information at this time.

F. WPCA

Chairman Childs commented that very good things are happening with WPCA and they will hopefully be adding new users.

G. Rails to Trails

Mr. Brett commented that a meeting is being planned for January to prepare for an engineering study which is the next step in the process. Concurrently, Zoning Officer, Steve Sadlowski will be reviewing the properties along the proposed routes. Feasibility study, environmental impact study and proposed costs will result from the engineering study. Mrs. LaPlante inquired about the potential costs of the engineering study. Mr. Brett did not have the figures with him, but they have received some quotes for the engineering study. The meeting in January will help to identify sources of federal funds and timeframes to offset the costs of building the trail.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Russo, second Ms. Lloyd, to adjourn at 8:14 PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Clerk**