

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2020 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: John Burdick, Shelley Lloyd, Polly Pobuda, Alternates Bill Baxter; Debbie Ventre

ABSENT: Jack Casey, Donna LaPlante, Meg Toro, Brian Watson;

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Jay Bailey (left at 7:10)

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Mr. Baxter was seated for Jack Casey. Ms. Ventre was seated for Meg Toro.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Burdick recognized Jay Bailey who mentioned that he is a contractor and when he needs work he doesn't advertise he knocks on doors. If anyone could come up with an incentive for the Hurley's, he would be happy to bang on their door.

Mr. Bailey brought the Zoning regulations and put them on the table and noted that those are local regulations not State Statute which could be changed to suit Economic Development. Mr. Bailey reiterated that he is offering his services to hound the Hurleys. Mr. Burdick commented that any suggestions for the Hurley Property should be discussed with First Selectman Jerram and the Board of Selectmen. He noted that EDC has previously been involved in discussions regarding that property.

Mr. Bailey noted that he believes that EDC should support the asset sale and he plans to vote in favor of it despite the potential impact to his expenses as he will likely be forced to connect. Mr. Burdick noted that all members are voters and will vote. He added that he is trying to economically develop Main Street to fill a void for a bed and breakfast since the Chapin Park Bed and Breakfast has closed. He is in the process of becoming a licensed bed and breakfast. He noted that Air B&B takes business away from businesses such as the Alcove Motel and by becoming a Bed and Breakfast he will offer another place for tourists to stay.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

February 10, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Pobuda, to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2020 regular meeting.

Ms. Lloyd noted that there was an error in the minutes that she had mentioned to Ms. Ventre after they were posted, but she could not recall what it was.

Unanimously approved.

4. BUSINESS SURVEY UPDATE

Mr. Burdick noted that Ms. Toro shared that she has 28 responses after the Business Council sent their request for members to respond and the survey has been resent. Survey was sent to 132. 79 opened it, 35 clicked through and 28 responded.

Mr. Burdick would like to commend Ms. Toro and the rest of the committee on their efforts on this project.

5. UPDATE FROM TRAILS COMMITTEE

Mr. Baxter noted that the committee meeting had been delayed but that the feedback from the public session was a very positive experience. Some committee members have been looking at some of the potential problem areas. The grade down the road must meet ADA requirements with platforms along the way. Down through the railroad right of way across from the pump house and then through the Poroco building. If that site is cleaned up it could make a nice pocket park. Ms. Pobuda noted it could be a nice parking area. Mr. Burdick noted that the meeting with the dots on the plan was a great idea. Ms. Lloyd commented that people made it clear they don't want the trail along Route 44.

Mr. Baxter noted that one of the challenging areas is to cross Route 44 by Marandino's. Mr. Burdick suggested perhaps a tunnel under 44 like the one under Route 4 in Unionville might be a solution. Mr. Burdick also noted that the parking design is more favorable to Canton and directs people toward Canton rather than New Hartford. Mr. Baxter noted that parking will be available in Satan's Kingdom off season.

Ms. Pobuda questioned the sale of the water and sewer assets and the ability to move ahead with the plan for the trail when the land may no longer belong to the Town. She suggested that the Trails Committee investigate that further. Mr. Baxter will look into her inquiries. Ms. Pobuda mentioned that the lease is online for the MDC property where the water tanks sit. She noted that the lease is up in five years and if we don't continue the lease the tanks become their property and we cannot sublease that property.

6. OPEN FARM DAY – PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Ms. Ventre shared that Mrs. LaPlante had reached out to all farms to see who would be interested in participating this year on September 19th. She has received commitments from 6 farms for this year, some of whom did not participate last year and expect that we might have up to 10 or 12 this year.

Ms. Ventre passed around information she had obtained from Peg Budny with options for jar openers or bags that could be given away this year to participants. Ms. Ventre noted that she thought of the bags last year when the plastic bag ban went into effect, but it was too late to purchase them. Ms. Lloyd and Ms. Pobuda both like the idea of

bags with A Town for All Seasons and the website printed on them. Mr. Burdick suggested that a local business might like to sponsor the bags in return for having their name printed on them. Ms. Lloyd wondered if the business council might suggest someone or sponsor the bags.

7. GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

Mr. Burdick and Ms. Lloyd both expressed that they would like to go but are not available on April 29th. Ms. Ventre noted that she had really enjoyed the event last year, but since it falls the day after the Presidential Primary this year she really cannot attend.

8. 2020 / 2021 BUDGET PLANNING

Vice Chair Burdick noted that the preliminary budget still has EDC at \$6,000 so he does not believe we have an urgent need to finalize our details for next year. Discussion can be deferred until more members are present.

9. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Vice Chair Burdick noted that he does believe it is important that this group support the proposed Asset Sale in terms of Economic Development.

10. CURRENT BUDGET / DISCUSSION

Secretary Ventre sent out the updated budget information prior to the meeting.

Ms. Ventre noted that there has been a tremendous response to the Facebook event for Hop Into Spring and the email offering the opportunity to participate had brought in some donations. She shared that Anita Barden had spoken with the organizers of other similar events and they typically plan to have 15 eggs per participant. Based upon those numbers and the Facebook responses there are concerns that we will not have enough eggs and candy from the donations. Ms. Lloyd had found packages of eggs at Goodwill that she had purchased and dropped off to Anita, but if even half of the responses show up and each brings 2 children that's 600 children which would be 9,000 eggs. Some of the local businesses who had verbally told Anita they would participate have not provided candy as yet. Would EDC be willing to allocate additional funds toward this event in case they are needed?

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Ventre, to allocate up to an additional \$100 to purchase plastic eggs or candy for the Hop Intro Spring event.

Ms. Pobuda mentioned that she would like to allocate more because candy is expensive. Ms. Lloyd amended her motion.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Ventre, to allocate up to an additional \$200 to purchase plastic eggs or candy for the Hop Into Spring event.

Unanimously approved.

Ms. Lloyd questioned whether the eggs would be refilled and replenished throughout the event. Ms. Ventre indicated that the volunteer ambulance will be handling the pictures with the Easter Bunny under the pavilion and the robotics club and Girl Scouts will help to redistribute eggs throughout the event. There will be a place for people to drop off the eggs to be reused for next year.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Ms. Lloyd asked that the Triathlon be added to the agenda for the next several months. She has been in touch with the organizers Mark & Tanya who will be staying with her. The triathlon will be Saturday, July 11th. They would like the gift certificates to be donated for prizes again. Instead of the tremendous amount of bananas purchased last year, they would prefer a mix of bananas, grapes and small oranges. They are considering grilling hotdogs and burgers instead of food trucks to feed the participants but would like donations of supplies. Additionally, they need volunteers to work at the event. There are a couple of paid positions to stay overnight as security watching the equipment overnight. Ms. Ventre suggested that the National Honor Society members might be interested in volunteer service hours. Ms. Lloyd noted that she has spoken with Girl Scouts out of Farmington who meet all year round. Mr. Burdick questioned whether we still have Boy Scouts in town. Ms. Lloyd will send a summary email of items needed and volunteer positions and asked that a News Item be posted on the town website seeking volunteers.

Ms. Lloyd also asked about opportunities to fill the vacancies on the Commission. Can there be a post on the website and Facebook page asking for volunteers. Ms. Ventre noted that there had been a recent Facebook post seeking a volunteer for the Stancliff Cove Authority and she had shared the old post to the Town page requesting volunteers for any of the Commissions with vacancies.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Baxter, second Ms. Pobuda to adjourn at 8:16 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary