

**TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 12, 2021 - 7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Brian Watson, Shelley Lloyd, Polly Pobuda, John Burdick, Meg Toro,
Commission Secretary Madeleine Toro

ABSENT: Jack Casey, Alternate Bill Baxter, Alternate Debbie Ventre

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: None

Chairman Brian Watson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER & SEATING OF ALTERNATES

No alternates were seated.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment on any agenda items.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

May 10, 2021 regular meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Pobuda, to approve the minutes of the May 10 regular meeting as written. *Unanimously approved.*

4. Resignation of Donna LaPlante – Brian

Ms. LaPlante has resigned from the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Watson thanked Ms. LaPlante for her years of service and dedication to the EDC and her input will be greatly missed.

5. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHLON – Shelley

Ms. Lloyd was happy to report that the Litchfield Hills Triathlon this past weekend went very well. Enrollment was almost doubled from 2019, and 194 people completed the triathlon. The volunteers enjoyed the experience, as well as the local youth who were paid to set up and clean up after the event. Volunteers included the local Boy Scout girl troop, who were tasked with running the water station and the Boy Scouts who camped the night prior to the event to watch equipment. The event's announcer is involved in local business in Torrington and wants to start outreach to neighboring towns. To thank the local businesses that contributed, Ms. Lloyd is handing out extra t-shirts and thank

you notes to the participating businesses. (*See attached document for list of participating businesses.*) Mr. Watson mentioned that he has seen on social media that some residents were not happy about the littering that resulted from the triathlon. During the running portion of the event, runners were throwing empty water bottles on the ground. Ms. Lloyd got a message from selectwoman Alicia Kennerson suggesting property owners put their recycling bins out and open for runners to throw their empty water cups and bottles in as a solution to this issue.

Ms. Poduba brought up that it is difficult to recruit volunteers for events like this and it takes a lot of time. For next year's triathlon, she aims to gather more volunteers to make it easier for the EDC and to help the event run a bit more smoothly. Mr. Watson recommends that next year we start looking for volunteers much sooner before the triathlon and do more outreach via social media. Ms. Lloyd suggested that next year we reach out to church youth groups, National Honor Society, the local schools, and boy and girl scout troops in the area to find more volunteers.

Mr. Burdick mentioned having more signage at the next triathlon to promote the EDC more. Ms. Lloyd then showed the t-shirts that were given out at the event, which featured the EDC name on the back as well as the names of all the participating businesses.

6. NEW HARTFORD TOURISM – Brian/John

Mr. Burdick mentioned that Omar at the New Hartford Mobil station is handing out flyers, brochures, and menus of local businesses to promote New Hartford tourism. He is building a newspaper stand to nicely display everything. Ms. Poduba mentioned that she noticed upon collecting various menus and business brochures that there is a lot of inconsistency in the formatting of the documents, and we should streamline them so displaying is easier. Mr. Watson suggested that we get a format from the restaurants that is all the same and then print them out and fold them, however Ms. Poduba mentioned that we do not have the money or personnel to do so.

Ms. Lloyd proposed an idea of a bulletin board with the business cards of various local businesses. She mentioned that Non-stop Ballroom has this and anyone in town can put their business cards up. Ms. Toro also referenced a bulletin board that Canton used to have on the side of one of the buildings, and suggested that New Hartford might be able to do something similar, however Ms. Lloyd mentioned that there might be issues with inappropriate content being posted to the board, as there was in Canton.

Ms. Poduba also mentioned the idea of having a map with all the businesses in town listed on it, as well as all the schools and libraries in town. Ms. Lloyd showed the current map of the businesses and pointed out that it is outdated and we need a better, more updated version. Additionally, the current map has Colebrook, Barkhamsted, and

Winsted included. Mr. Watson then suggested that we could put QR codes on the maps that would lead to the business websites or menus. Ms. Lloyd pointed out that the map may be too small to have QR codes, to which Mr. Burdick said there could be legend around the edge of the map where the QR codes could be.

Mr. Burdick mentioned possibly getting a marketing company to create a map for the town. Ms. Lloyd inquired about digitizing the map so people could find it online, and Mr. Burdick reminded her that we have a limited budget for these types of projects, however the investment might be well worth it, since the template could be easily updated each year. Ms. Lloyd was wondering if the company that manages the town website would be able to create a digitized map. Mr. Burdick said he is willing to get in touch with a marketing company in town to inquire about creating a new and improved map and the pricing for it.

Mr. Burdick also mentioned that it is important to remember that we are not just a town, we are a region. He said there is a benefit to having multiple towns on one map. The towns in the Northwest Hills are very interconnected and relationships between the towns and businesses in the area should not be overlooked.

Ms. Pobuda suggested that we approach businesses in town to display and distribute maps once we have an updated map. The committee then listed some businesses in town that would be willing to display the maps, such as Grezyck's Farm, the Mobil Station, Foodtown, and the post offices.

7. OPEN FARM DAY – Brian/Shelley/Donna

Mr. Watson said that it is up to the individual Farms to come up with what they wish to do for Open Farm Day. The Farms must let the EDC know of what they plan to do and we will handle the signage and advertising. Connecticut Valley Winery is not going to be able to participate in Open Farm Day this year due to high demand and limited staff. Mr. Watson concluded that as of right now, the committee is unsure about the status of Open Farm Day and we should know for sure by next meeting if we can do it or not. There has not been any response from the farms that were initially interested in participating in what they plan to do for the Open Farm Day.

8. UPDATE FROM TRAILS COMMITTEE – Bill

Mr. Burdick mentioned that he is disappointed that the rails to trail project is coming along very slowly. The committee has not met in a long time due to COVID.

Ms. Poduda suggested that we mark the trailheads on any town maps that are made to draw people to the trails.

9. Food Truck Regulations - Brian

Mr. Watson said the biggest problem with the food truck ordinance that was discussed at the last town meeting was the limit of 18 times a food truck can come to one business before having to get approval from the Selectmen. Brewery Legitimus has a problem with this ordinance as well since there have already been five different food trucks that have already been at the brewery at least 25 times as of July 1. Additionally, they paid approximately \$6,000 last year for food truck permits. Mr. Watson thinks the EDC should recommend removing any limit and keep the rest of the regulation the same. He also said that first selectman, Dan Jerram mentioned that, in his opinion, no other business in town will ever hit the 18 visit limit besides Brewery Legitimus so why have a limit at all.

Ms. Toro then brought up that there is really no difference between a hot dog stand and a food truck and there are not as many limitations imposed on hot dog stands. Mr. Watson agreed. Mr. Burdick then brought up that New Hartford is benchmarking their food truck ordinance off of Canaan's regulations, while they should be using towns like West Hartford and Canton as an example, in his opinion. The commission unanimously agreed that the ordinance needs to remove any limit on the quantity of times a food truck visits a business.

Mr. Burdick inquired about the 250 feet rule in the food truck ordinance, which states that a food truck must be parked at least 250 feet away from a brick-and-mortar restaurant at all times. Ms. Lloyd disagreed with this rule, stating that she believes it restricts business. Mr. Watson then stated he thinks the 250 feet rule is fair since a food truck being too close to a physical restaurant can cause unfair competition and hinder business.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Pobuda, to have Mr. Watson put together a letter to First Selectman Dan Jerram asking to remove the 18 visit limit for each business. *The motion was unanimously approved.*

10. BUDGET PLANNING (5 minutes)

There were no new budget updates to discuss.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Mr. Burdick came forward with three zoning updates. First of all, he stated that Dollar General has come back with a new application which will need to be reviewed by Zoning. There is also a formal application in progress for a new event venue on Ramstein Road. The last zoning update is on the new Norbrook Brewery which is proposed to be located on the property across from Kinsey Road. These proposals will be discussed in further detail during the planning and zoning meeting on July 14, at 7:00 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Pobuda, to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM.
Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Madeleine Toro, Secretary
Economic Development Commission**