

**TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, November 8th, 2021 - 7:00 PM**

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

ABSENT: Jack Casey

Chairman Brian Watson called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Bill Baxter was seated as an alternate for one of the vacancies.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to add an agenda item to review the 2022 meeting dates. *Unanimously approved.*

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment on any agenda items.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Baxter, to approve the October 4, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Burdick and Mr. Watson abstained from voting since they were not present at the October 4 meeting. The motion was otherwise approved.

4. NEW HARTFORD TOURISM – Map Update – Brian

Mr. Watson has spoken to Maria and Greg Watkins of Creative Services who we have been looking into getting a map from. He informed the commission that the usual price for maps from Creative Services is \$3,500, but we will get a 30% discount, meaning the final price will be \$2,450. Maria will have to create a new map template and then Greg will create and put QR codes onto the back of the map. Ms. Lloyd then suggested that if we do not have enough money left in the EDC budget for the maps we should approach the selectmen and see if the cost can be split with them, as it was with the “Dine New Hartford” signs. Ms. Toro then inquired about whether we would have access to the map in order to be able to periodically update the map after it is made. Mr. Watson informed her that the map would be completely ours after it is made, and we would have to pay Creative Services \$70 an hour to update it after that. He suggested that the map be updated on an as-needed basis. Ms. Lloyd then said that she believes we should be more concerned with making sure we update the map to include businesses that are opening up in town

rather than removing the ones that are closing. Ms. Toro suggested that we wait to update the maps until there are a significant amount of changes to it that warrant spending the money on updating it.

Ms. Pobuda inquired about being able to print the maps, to which Mr. Watson said that the maps will be able to be printed and be available digitally. Additionally, there will be bigger copies that could be hung up in bulletin boards around town as well as smaller copies that could be handed out to individuals.

According to Mr. Burdick, the next steps for the map should be getting all of our prices and information together and approaching the first selectmen as Ms. Lloyd mentioned to see if they are able to split the cost with the EDC. Ms. Pobuda then suggested that we could mention to the selectmen that this could be funded under the revitalization act to help businesses post-COVID.

5. Discover Litchfield Hills Website – Brian

Mr. Watson informed the commission that the Discover Litchfield Website will be free of cost to the town because there is a grant that covers it. Mr. Burdick informed everyone that the website has a link to New Hartford's town website, and Ms. Pobuda suggested the town website reciprocates and has a link to the Discover Litchfield Hills Website as well.

Mr. Watson plans to sit down with whoever is in charge of the Litchfield Hills website soon and discuss next steps. Ms. Lloyd suggested that he ask how long the grant lasts for and what happens when the grant runs out. Mr. Burdick also suggested we find out about the regular cost of the website without the grant.

6. Holiday Events Small Business Weekend, Light New Hartford – Polly

Ms. Pobuda informed everyone that the Beekley Library Book Friends has an online auction, as well as a teacup auction at the library. She reminded everyone that contributing to library fundraising indirectly helps save residents tax dollars. She also informed everyone of the grand opening of the cupcake store satellite location in the Mobil gas station on November 14th 11-3. The store will eventually open in the former laundromat across from Dunkin Donuts.

Ms. Pobuda also continued to inform everyone of upcoming events in town. The Northwestern Regional Craft Fair will be on November 20 from 9-3. On the 21st, Grezyck's Farm will be having a fall festival from 10-4. Following those events is Small Business Saturday on November 27th. She suggested that we do anything we can to help on this day, such as put out the "Shop New Hartford" signs and "Celebrate New Hartford" banners, as Ms. Lloyd had mentioned at the previous meeting. Ms. Lloyd has spoken with Anita Barden, who told her that one of the building owners near where the event is taking place would most likely allow us to

hang the banner from the second floor of his building. Ms. Lloyd also assured everyone that all these events should be put on the town website calendar.

Ms. Pobuda also mentioned the Lutheran Church fair on December 4 from 9-2. This is the day before Light New Hartford, which will take place on December 5. On that same day, Brewery Legitimus is hosting Sip and Shop. At this event, there will be 20 local businesses in attendance, according to Mr. Burdick. Mr. Watson suggested that these events all go on the Open for Business EDC Facebook page to get the word out to more people.

Ms. Pobuda noticed that last weekend at the Halloween trick or treating event that the light poles in front of Barden's Farm store and the bank were not on. Mr. Burdick mentioned that this is connected to the same power source that is used for the Light New Hartford tree, so it is important to get this fixed if there is any sort of electrical issue.

In regards to Light New Hartford, Ms. Pobuda updated everyone that Carissa Monroe is still in charge of the event, although she has not gotten in contact with her. She has heard that Santa Claus will be at the event, although she is unsure how contact with the children will be handled with COVID safety restrictions. Ms. Lloyd then inquired about the current whereabouts of the banners. Starting the Friday after Thanksgiving, we will need to start getting the banners up with the dates of all the upcoming events.

7. Light Pole Banners - Brian

Mr. Watson received an email from First Selectman Dan Jerram saying that the town has replaced the broken light pole banners and he suggests that the EDC orders new banners to replace the ones that are still up but are aging and need to be replaced. Ms. Lloyd commented that she has seen 3 that definitely need to be replaced. Mr. Burdick suggested a spot near the junction of Cedar Lane and Route 202 for a new light pole, however Ms. Lloyd informed him that we are not allowed to put up any new banners, only replace existing ones.

Mr. Watson said that Mr. Jerram informed him that in the past the town used cloth-based signs that were able to be easily washed and seemed to hold up better than the vinyl-based signs. Ms. Lloyd pointed out that the cloth ones did not have any pictures on them like the vinyl ones do, and that we would have to replace all the banners if we wanted to go back to the cloth-based design.

MOTION Mr. Baxter, second Mr. Burdick, to order 6 new replacement banners.
Unanimously approved.

8. Update from Trails Committee- Bill

Mr. Baxter had some big updates from the Trails Committee. The committee recently met and are having another meeting in November where consultants will be bringing in a finalized plan of the first 2 phases of the trails plan. Phase 1 will include the downtown intersection and getting up the ramp, and phase 2 will include down to the Mobil station and up to Church Street. From there we have the option of tearing down an old contaminated auto parts building and putting a park on the property. The trail could go a number of different ways, such as down by the Waring Business Park and past the senior housing development. According to Mr. Baxter, the project must be completed in phases because there is not enough funding to complete it all at once. He expects it will also be met with opposition from residents. After the next Trails Committee meeting, once the committee knows the final costs of everything, they will need to gather more funding to continue on with the project.

Mr. Baxter informed everyone that there are lots of state and federal trails grants that can be taken advantage of. Mr. Burdick asked if the consultants on the project will be in charge of writing grants, to which Mr. Baxter stated he did not know yet, but it is definitely needed. Ms. Lloyd pointed out that perhaps it would be helpful to reach out to officials in other towns such as Canton or Simsbury that have been successful in getting grants for trails. Mr. Baxter agreed with this, and mentioned that we also need to encourage Barkhamsted and Collinsville to possibly connect to the New Hartford trail.

Mr. Baxter also wanted to discuss the APRA funding and how it can be used for economic development, however Mr. Watson informed him that the selectmen's office will be handling this. Ms. Lloyd said that there will be meetings concerning this funding and getting feedback about how it should be used from town residents. She encouraged everyone to attend the meetings and give their input. Mr. Burdick mentioned that other towns have put together groups of potential stakeholders on where the money could go.

9. Downtown Improvement Ideas

Mr. Watson stated that the town has gotten a grant to survey the lot where the New Hartford House was, and the survey work is mostly completed. Extra work is needed to determine where the town hall's utilities are so there is no interference during construction. Once that is completed architects and engineers will start developing the building plan.

Mr. Baxter stated that he has gone before the Board of Selectmen a few weeks ago and told them he believes there should be an economic development specialist in town. He believes that the current Planning and Zoning Commission is not able to spend enough time focusing on planning and developing new ideas since they are heavily focused on zoning issues. He believes we really

need someone in town who can put together and execute a plan for downtown development. Mr. Watson pointed out that we should be researching and finding grants that can fund these kinds of projects to revive the downtown. Ms. Lloyd mentioned that other towns form non-profits to get grants, since non-profit groups are typically more likely to get grants.

10. Budget Planning

Mr. Watson stated that we should buy 6 light pole banners for the light poles this year, as previously mentioned, and then 3 per year after that. Ms. Lloyd agreed. Ms. Pobuda inquired about the 500 flashlights that were being ordered for Light New Hartford. Ms. Lloyd confirmed that these flashlights were being ordered and that we should let Carissa Monroe know of our plans to hand them out at Light New Hartford. Mr. Burdick suggested that we reach out to Peggy Bundy, who the flashlights were ordered from, to confirm that the order was made. The light pole banners, the flashlights, and the maps are items that need to be added to the budget once prices are confirmed, according to Mr. Watson.

11. 2022 Meeting Dates

The commission confirmed that there will be no December meeting this year. For 2022, the meeting dates are as follows: January 10, February 7, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 3, November 14, and December 12. The December 12 meeting may be cancelled if the commission agrees to do so when the time comes. All meetings are the second Monday of the month, besides the February and October meetings, which meet on the first Monday of the month due to holidays.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the 2022 meeting dates.

Unanimously approved.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Pobuda, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Madeleine Toro
Commission Secretary
Economic Development Commission