

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2019 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: John Burdick, Mary Ann Gunning, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd, Polly Pobuda, Meg Toro; Alternate Bill Baxter and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre

ABSENT: Jack Casey, Alternate Robin Buzzi

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Dan Jerram, First Selectman (7:04); Kathryn Boughton – Republican American (7:20)

Assistant Town Clerk, Debbie Ventre administered the oath of office to Meg Toro who had been appointed as a full member by the Board of Selectmen.

Meeting Chair Polly Pobuda called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Mr. Baxter was seated for Mr. Casey.

2. GUEST SPEAKER – Doug Szydlo of Collinsville Antiques

Ms. Pobuda noted that she heard back from Mr. Szydlo today that he was not available this evening. She noted that she had also reached out to the owners of Canterbury Village, but they were focusing on a development they are currently building in another town.

Ms. Pobuda asked for other suggestions of who could be invited to a future meeting. Ms. Gunning shared that Metro-Prime.com runs senior housing in neighboring communities. They have developments with approximately 100 units that currently have waiting lists for openings.

Mr. Burdick noted that previously local businesses have been invited to attend EDC meetings. Ms. Lloyd suggested Peter Marandino. Ms. Pobuda will ask him. Mr. Burdick also suggested Dick Perry of Altra Controls.

3. ELECTION OF TEMPORARY CHAIR FOR JULY 8 MEETING

Ms. Gunning inquired if the Vacancies item could be addressed prior to electing a temporary chair. Secretary Ventre noted Ms. Toro had been appointed a full member, but there are still two full member seats and one alternate seat vacant. Mr. Jerram indicated that there is a candidate for one of the full seats, but could not disclose who that individual might be. Ms. Lloyd opined that a permanent chair should be elected once the vacancies have been filled. Secretary Ventre commented that out of the

members present only Mr. Burdick and Ms. Toro had not yet served as temporary chair. Mr. Burdick noted that he may not be present at the July meeting.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Baxter, to nominate Meg Toro to serve as temporary chair for the July meeting. *Unanimously approved.*

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

May 13, 2019 Regular Meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2019 regular meeting.

Ms. Gunning noted that under Item 15 it was also suggested that someone from Canterbury Village be invited to attend the June meeting.

Unanimously approved as amended. Mr. Baxter abstained.

5. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHLON

Ms. Gunning noted that she did not have anything new to share.

MOTION Ms. Gunning, second Mr. Baxter, to allocate up to \$100 to purchase bananas from Marandino's for the triathlon participants as done previously. *Unanimously approved*

Mr. Jerram shared that the State is preparing to repave Route 44 from Dunkin Donuts to the Saybrook Fish House and it is scheduled to be milled the week of the triathlon. He has a call in to the State to advise them of the scheduled triathlon. He noted that rainy weather may delay the process, but he will notify the organizers of the planned construction along the bike route.

6. BUSINESS SURVEY

Ms. Lloyd noted that Ms. Toro has set up the survey monkey. Ms. Toro brought up the survey on the screen and reviewed with membership.

Mr. Burdick asked where the survey process started and Ms. Lloyd responded that the committee started with a University of Minnesota survey.

Mrs. LaPlante shared that the New Hartford Business Council does not wish to share their membership listing, so she has compiled a list of 200 businesses and has email addresses for about 80 of them. She suggested that EDC might wish to send a paper mailing to those businesses for whom we do not have an email. Ms. Pobuda noted that because we have the survey monkey subscription we could use the program for another survey during the subscription period. Ms. Lloyd suggested that a future survey could be directed toward residents. Mr. Burdick questioned what the next step would be when the survey is completed. Ms. Lloyd noted that the hope is that the results correspond with the EDC goals and if not, the goals should be adjusted.

Mr. Baxter questioned if the survey is tied to the Plan of Conservation and Development. Ms. Lloyd noted that many of the questions are related directly to the plan. Mrs. LaPlante will send her spreadsheet to Ms. Toro and the survey can be rolled out in July. It was agreed that the survey would remain open for 3 months. Ms. Lloyd noted that the results should also be shared with the other Commissions and the First Selectman's office. Ms. Pobuda recommends that the results be shared after the survey is completed and the results have been analyzed.

7. UPDATE RTT/MUT MEETING RESULTS AND MAPPING

Mr. Baxter noted that he is on the Committee which needs to be expanded and the Board of Selectmen will appoint additional members. Mr. Jerram noted that the plan is to expand the committee to seven members and give them a specific charge at the June Board of Selectmen's meeting. Ms. Pobuda suggested that Greg O'Brien might be a strong candidate as he has been very vocal in support of trails. Ms. Gunning suggested that an email blast be sent from the website asking for volunteers.

8. FARM DAY

Mrs. LaPlante shared that she has sent another letter to the Farms. Millstream Farm (Caren Ross' Montessori School) has agreed to do something but wants to limit her participants so there will be a sign up for her sessions.

Ms. Lloyd noted that she had reviewed the handout of suggested giveaway items and really liked the pig keychain. Ms. Pobuda suggested that all future handouts or giveaways include the website. It was suggested that flashlights could be done again as there would not be any set up fees.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick to order 250 to 500 flashlights based upon quantity discount with the new website printed on the back to be used for Farm Day and any future events. *Unanimously Approved.*

Mr. Burdick asked how many farms had committed to Farm Day. Mrs. LaPlante noted she currently has 6 farms signed up. Mr. Burdick then commented that the Brewery had announced the Farm to Table collaborative event with BLT & Barden Farm to be held on Sunday evening. Mrs. LaPlante noted that it will be held at Barden Farm unless inclement weather requires it to be indoors in which case it will be held at the Brewery. She also mentioned that she planned to work with BrodiePark Inc to advertise Farm Day, New Hartford Day and the Farm to Table as weekend activities.

9. WEBSITE / EMAIL UPDATE

Secretary Ventre noted that she has received positive feedback on the new website format. Unfortunately, her efforts to encourage businesses to sign-up for the free business directory have not been very successful. She has taken down the pages previously created except for the restaurants, but may remove that listing as well in an effort to encourage the remaining restaurants to create and update their own listing.

Ms. Lloyd commented that the Business Council was not willing to do a sign-up session until the Fall. She believes we should definitely pursue scheduling that evening in September.

Mr. Jerram noted that he had been contacted by the NWCOG about joining DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com. The website was pulled up on the screen for members to view.

Secretary Ventre also noted that it seems feasible to have a new email address created for the EDC which would be directed to both the Commission secretary and the Administrative Assistant to the First Selectman. Our IT consultant was to be consulted after Memorial Day, but his recent visit was focused on the Tax Assessor and Registrar of Voters office relocation. Hopefully it will be addressed on his next visit.

10. POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE FORUMS / GUESTS

A. Promoting Businesses

Ms. Lloyd noted that the event for September to encourage businesses to sign up for our website and ctvisit should be scheduled. "Let Us Help you Promote your Business for Free" was suggested by Mr. Burdick as a tagline.

11. SENIOR HOUSING

Ms. Pobuda noted that Ms. Gunning had offered a suggested website to visit. She then passed around a sheet listing definitions of the different types of communities.

12. VACANCIES

Ms. Pobuda noted that there are still 2 full seats and 1 alternate vacancy on the Commission. Ms. Pobuda commented that Ms. Ventre could be appointed as a member. Mr. Jerram Ms. Ventre corrected that she was considering the Alternate position because she could continue to take the minutes as she has been unless she is seated. If seated, the Commission could purchase a recorder so that she could transcribe the minutes after the meeting. She noted that she was concerned about public perception of a member being paid as secretary. All members indicated they did not have an issue with that. Ms. Pobuda commented that she thought it would be good to have someone who has the history with the Commission that Ms. Ventre does.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to allocated up to \$100 to purchase a recorder for recording the meetings to allow Ms. Ventre to transcribe the minutes. *Unanimously approved*

13. CURRENT BUDGET / DISCUSSION

Secretary Ventre passed around an updated budget report reflecting expenses paid in the current fiscal year and the recurring expenses for next year's budget. She noted that correspondence had been received from Connecticut Main Street regarding an increase in their annual membership fee. The budget proposal for the upcoming year reflects that new fee.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Baxter, to renew the Connecticut Main Street membership at the new rate.

Mr. Burdick noted that there are excellent programs and workshops provided by Connecticut Main Street and we should take advantage of those opportunities.

Unanimously approved

Mr. Burdick questioned what the status is on getting the banners switched over. Mr. Jerram noted that he has all of the signs and banners and they will be done as soon as the road crew has time to do so.

Ms. Lloyd questioned whether funds need to be allocated to printing to allow for printing a passport for the Farm Day event. Discussion ensued on whether funds needed to be allocated for next year's budget at this meeting. The consensus was that next year's expenses could be addressed at the July meeting.

14. DISCUSSION OF CHAIRMANSHIP

Ms. Pobuda noted that this item had been discussed under item 3 and could be reviewed once the vacancies have been filled.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Ms. Ventre noted that in preparing for tonight's meeting she noted that there had been a discussion at the April meeting about sending letters of appreciation to Jim and Mark. She drafted letters to be signed by the members present tonight since the Commission does not currently have a Chair. The letters were passed among the members for signature.

Mr. Jerram shared that Dunkin Donuts has broken ground and the million dollar development is moving forward. All Star Storage has started building an addition because their units are full. Dean's Stove and Spa is being renovated on the corner of Wickett Street and Route 44. With the approval of the Trails grant, we have positive news. He also is having discussions with a possible new business who is considering making our town center their home.

Ms. Lloyd asked whether there is a plan to market the existing Dunkin Donuts and former laundromat property. Mr. Jerram believes that the Dunkin building will lease fairly quickly and perhaps the laundromat is a hidden gem.

Ms. Pobuda asked about the library expansion. She noted that with the opening of Barden Farm Market we are seeing increased foot traffic and the crosswalks seem to have disappeared. She asked that the State be reminded to restore our crosswalks. Mr. Jerram noted that the State has regulations limiting mid-block crosswalks.

Mr. Burdick asked about additional parking between the Post Office and the tennis courts. Mr. Jerram indicated that is in the works and will be voted at the next town meeting. He noted that there are several parcels that will need to be addressed at that meeting.

Ms. Gunning asked Ms. Ventre for an update on the Tourism Conference. She noted that she had filled in when Mr. Bean's health prevented him from attending. It was an energizing experience and she shared the keynote speaker's breakout session emphasized that we need to create a brand that fits our identity not create a brand and try to mold our identity to it.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Toro, to adjourn at 8:31 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary