

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 08, 2019 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: John Burdick, Jack Casey (7:42 pm), Pat Casey, Mary Ann Gunning, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd, Polly Pobuda, Meg Toro; Alternate Debbie Ventre

ABSENT: Brian Watson, Alternates Bill Baxter and Robin Buzzi

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Lance Perry, Perry Technologies, Kathryn Boughton (7:05) and David Rosengren (7:21)

Meeting Chair Meg Toro called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Ms. Ventre was seated for Mr. Watson.

2. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ms. Toro noted that the Board of Selectmen had appointed Brian Watson and Pat Casey as new members and Debbie Ventre as an Alternate Member.

Mr. Casey shared that he is President of the Historical Society has retired from an IT career.

3. GUEST SPEAKER – Lance Perry of Perry Technologies

Ms. Toro welcomed Mr. Lance Perry of Perry Technologies. Mr. Perry noted the coincidence that this Commission was founded in 1959 when the Underwood factory went out across the river and his Father bought the property in 1961. He then gave a brief background of his family's businesses in New Hartford and how his father's interests and abilities evolved into manufacturing gears and precision machining as they currently do. He does not believe there is much that the town can do for their current location, but notes that he owns property that could be of interest for Economic Development. Most recently he acquired the land and gravel pit where Precision Tree is located in Satan's Kingdom which is designated industrial land and it is probably good for that. He also purchased the Toffolon property adjacent to the Canton Industrial Park. He noted that the GIS system needs to be updated so that you can print what you see with the topo layers rather than just the base map. He described his hopes to rehab the gravel pit and the prior Marfyak farm that had the soil washed away by the flood. He noted that 10 Litchfield Turnpike is classified as residential and if developed with one or two acre lots could be a disaster for New Hartford. Ms. Lloyd inquired if the property would be accessed from Canton. Ms. Pobuda noted that the property is zoned residential, so a change in zoning would be beneficial for him. Mr. Perry noted that the Greenwoods Industrial park had originally been intended for recreation area but when that failed it was zoned industrial. Ms. Gunning asked if any

of his land would be suitable for elderly housing and asked for clarification if the land is located in Canton or New Hartford. Mr. Perry noted that the property is located in New Hartford but is inaccessible from New Hartford unless you could drive thru the gorge. The land that is immediately adjacent to the Canton Industrial area and therefore has access to water and natural gas could be developed for industrial uses to generate tax revenue. He noted that would be more practical than building residential where the town would need to run school buses out to pick up the children. Ms. Gunning commented that for elderly housing you would not need school buses and Mr. Perry agreed you could put that there. Ms. Lloyd commented that this Commission has frequently discussed regional cooperative efforts and inquired if that could be possible there. Mr. Perry agreed noting that it would be necessary as access would be from Ramp Road but connections to natural gas or utilities would probably be possible. Mr. Burdick commented that topography wise the New Hartford sewer line could be extended to Satan's Kingdom but connection there would not be practical.

Ms. Lloyd commented that she wonders about EMS service for this property because the proximity of the Canton fire station is much closer than New Hartford and that would be another consideration for a cooperative agreement. Mr. Perry agreed and noted that he doesn't know that New Hartford has much land that has access to natural gas and that could be possible in this location. He would like to rehab the gravel pit where the fill was taken for the Canton dump. Mr. Burdick asked how he feels about the Rails to Trails project connecting to Canton. Mr. Perry noted that he is on the Regional Planning Commission and he thinks the trail project is wonderful. The utilization is excellent and he loves the concept.

Ms. Pobuda asked how easy or difficult it is to get qualified staff. Mr. Perry noted that no one comes in qualified. They pretty much make their own competencies. Some employees come through trade schools, some have engineering degrees while others only have a grade school education but learn on the job or through certification programs. He further noted the distinction between industrial and commercial in that industrial businesses have income that is coming in from outside of New Hartford – they ship their products all over the world. A commercial business largely depends upon local income as money is taken from one person locally and given to another. He cited an example that if you have 3 pizza places in town and a new strip mall is built which includes another, the new business is simply taking business away from the existing pizza places whereas an industrial business can bring in income from all over the world.

Ms. Pobuda inquired if they train their own people. Mr. Perry agreed noting that they are a state apprentice program and offer training and certifications to their staff, but they do lose their trained staff to competitors. They have many accreditation and credentials that provide their customers with a level of trust in their products. Ms. Pobuda mentioned the robotics gearheads at Regional 7 and inquired if they hire staff from the High School. Ms. Gunning inquired if most of his employees live in New Hartford. Mr. Perry does not believe that to be true noting that most of his employees cannot afford to live in New Hartford, they live in Torrington or Winsted. Ms. Gunning commented that with all this land, affordable housing is not something that he thinks would be nice for his employees and for the town. He noted that he does serve on the Regional Planning Commission and a lot of his employees live in housing on farmland

that he has purchased and many of them save money to purchase their own home. Mr. Burdick questioned whether he has considered cluster housing on some of his property and Mr. Perry noted he has, but he does not think that there is a need for more housing. Ms. Gunning commented that there is currently a six month waiting list in the towns east of us, Canton, Avon and Farmington for elderly rental housing. She noted that a waiting list then goes to supply and demand. Mr. Perry commented that the ability to keep it cheap requires a higher density. He also noted that a waiting list can also be because the pricing is substantially lower.

Ms. Pobuda thanked Mr. Perry for his time. He suggested that if the zoning of 10 Litchfield Turnpike were changed, it would still remain a forest but it would ensure that the town does not need to worry about an influx of children from residential development and if that were done maybe he would get excited and talk to the State about the right to use the road.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

June 10, 2019 Regular Meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Toro, to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2019 regular meeting as amended.

Ms. Toro commented that the discussion about Discover Litchfield Hills on page 4 should include that the Commission would like to wait to see how the site develops to determine if it would be a worthwhile investment. It was also noted that the new site does not come up in google searches.

Ms. Toro also noted that on page 6 the discussion should have included clarification that the mid-block crosswalks such as the one across from Pizza Pete's and down by the Mobil gas station have worn away and not been restored.

Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick called the motion.
Unanimously approved as amended.

5. DISCUSSION OF CHAIRMANSHIP / TEMPORARY CHAIR FOR AUGUST

Ms. Toro opened the topic of the chairmanship and inquired if the Commission is fully staffed.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Mr. J. Casey, to nominate Meg Toro to serve as chair of the EDC.

Ms. Lloyd commented you can decline if you wish. Ms. Toro indicated she would be willing if no one else wants to do it. Ms. Gunning commented that Ms. Toro would be very good because she is exact in what she says and follows thru and what she says she is going to do. She noted that those members who had been on for a while tend to get mired in old things and the Commission needs someone fresh in the position and she very much admires Ms. Toro's

skills and believes she would make an excellent chair. Ms. Toro noted that as long as everyone helps. *Unanimously approved.*

Ms. Lloyd commented that not having a Vice Chair caused a great deal of difficulty when we lost the last Chair so she believes we need to select one.

MOTION Ms.Toro, second Mr. J. Casey, to nominate John Burdick to serve as vice-chair of the EDC.

Mr. Burdick accepted the nomination. Mr. Casey moved the vote. *Unanimously approved.*

6. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHLON

Ms. Gunning noted that things are pretty much set for the triathlon. The roads have been milled and she does not know if they will be paved by Saturday. Mark Wilson has been informed that there is a possibility that the roads will be milled and he said that's fine they can go ahead with the triathlon.

The committee has collected 45 different gifts to be distributed randomly throughout the day giving support to the businesses who have donated. Mr. J. Casey noted that if they are awarded early and the recipient cannot use the prize they can give it to someone else. Ms. Gunning commented to Mark Wilson that the Announcer could give them away throughout the day and he said they did not have an announcer. Ms. Gunning spoke with Christine Hayward and she has arranged for Greg O'Brien to be the Announcer. Members commented that he would be excellent. Each envelope containing a prize includes a comment about the business so that Greg can announce information about the business who donated the prize.

Ms. Lloyd inquired whether there would be a food truck this year. Ms. Gunning indicated she did not know. Mr. Burdick commented that in order to justify a food truck, the vendor needs to actually make money for their time to be worthwhile. It was noted that last year the food truck had to move due to the bear and the new location was a distance away.

Ms. Gunning expressed her thanks to Ms. Lloyd and Ms. Pobuda for their assistance in visiting businesses and noted that Ms. Pobuda also talked to people about being listed on the website. Ms. Pobuda noted that she thought it was a great experience interacting with people in town. She feels a personal touch goes a long way. She also mentioned that Mary Ann has posters for the triathlon and feels that we had a tremendous response from the local businesses who are frequently asked for their support. Ms. Gunning noted that every business who contributed last year contributed again this year and usually for more. She noted that Ski Sundown donated 2 ski passes, Radwick's donated ten \$10 gift cards, Farmington River Tubing, Non-Stop Ballroom Dancing and Main Stream Canoes, Barden Farm Market, BLT and the Findery also donated.

Mr. Burdick complimented Ms. Gunning on her efforts coordinating all this.

Ms. Gunning asked if the Business Council could have a member available to man the Business Council table on Friday afternoon 4 – 6 for pre-registration and Saturday 8 or 9 – Noon. Bring your own table just in case. Mr. Burdick asked for priority of Saturday versus Sunday. Ms. Gunning noted there will be town maps, the town brochure and the restaurant brochure.

7. BUSINESS SURVEY

Ms. Toro noted that she had received feedback from First Selectman Jerram on the survey language. She brought up the survey on the screen and reviewed the suggested changes with membership.

The Commission reviewed each of the suggested changes and discussed whether or not to implement the changes.

Ms. Lloyd commented that she would like to thank everyone because she felt that as the original member of the survey committee she found this to be a real team effort with everyone contributing.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to make the changes as discussed and launch the survey. *Unanimously approved.*

Ms. LaPlante noted that there are some businesses on her list for whom we do not have email addresses. She suggested that a postcard be sent to those businesses asking them to provide an email address to offer their input or be contacted to complete a paper survey. Ms. Pobuda commented to be sure to list the website on any printed materials. Ms. Lloyd noted that if a business simply does not have computer access we should be a little flexible and complete the survey on paper then entered the responses into survey monkey but each such response would need a unique email address.

Ms. Toro asked if there are a lot of businesses without email addresses. Ms. LaPlante clarified that she had searched websites and facebook seeking email addresses but many businesses have contact us forms on their website rather than email addresses. Ms. Toro inquired if it makes sense to enter information into contact forms instead of paying for postage.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Ventre, to allocate up to \$100 for postcards. *Unanimously approved.*

8. UPDATE RTT/MUT MEETING RESULTS AND MAPPING

This item was not addressed due to Mr. Baxter's absence.

Mr. Burdick commented that he thinks it is very important that this commission take action and follow-up on Mr. Perry's comments regarding the land he owns off of ramp road..

9. FARM DAY

Mrs. LaPlante shared that she has 8 farms committed to participate on Saturday, September 13th. She met today with Pam Fitzgerald and Elaine Murphy of Brodie Park Inc. and spoke with them about New Hartford Day because we would like to advertise the weekend. They thought that was a good idea but did not have any name suggestions. They are trying to reinvent New Hartford Day and find something that will attract younger families and younger people. All booths are invited to have some type of activity going on. Non-profits will not longer receive a free booth space. Ms. Pobuda commented that Pine Meadow Fire Dept always paid. Ms. Lloyd commented that she had a booth for years for the Regional High School Band and they also paid for their space. She then commented that they had needed electricity and perhaps that's why they needed to pay. Mr. J. Casey inquired if Farm Day and New Hartford Day are the same day. Ms. LaPlante clarified that Farm Day will be on Saturday and New Hartford Day will be on Sunday. Ms. Lloyd commented that the wine tasting is Friday night. Mr. P. Casey noted that the Historical Society Wine Tasting will be on September 6th. Everyone was dismayed to learn that was a different weekend. Ms. Lloyd suggested that it be planned for the same weekend next year. Ms. LaPlante noted that on Sunday evening after New Hartford Day is the Farm to Table Dinner presented by BLT, Brewery Legitimus and Barden Farm. Mr. J. Casey asked where the dinner will be. Ms. LaPlante explained it will be at Barden Farm, weather permitting or at the Brewery if inclement weather is expected. Mr. Burdick noted that the new room will be open by then. Ms. Pobuda commented that the number of tickets for the dinner will be limited to about 100. Mr. Burdick noted that CSABC members have the first opportunity to purchase the tickets.

Mrs. LaPlante noted that she will be looking for support from EDC to print a passport for that day. She will be soliciting all farms not just those participating for donations for a drawing from all the passports turned in. Ms. Pobuda suggested that prize drawing could be held at the dinner. When Ms. Lloyd and Mr. Burdick objected that most people will not be able to attend the dinner, Mr. Burdick suggested that the drawing be held at New Hartford Day to encourage attendance.

Ms. Lloyd inquired if we plan to print the passport and map inhouse or if we would be outsourcing that. Ms. LaPlante indicated that we could print it inhouse, but since we probably want it to be printed on heavier stock it would be better to outsource it. Ms. Lloyd suggested that price quotes be obtained. Mr. Burdick offered a motion and Ms. LaPlante indicated she did not think we are at that point as yet – certainly at the next meeting. Ms. Gunning noted that Ms. LaPlante is a committee of one and Ms. Ventre said no – a committee of two. Ms. LaPlante indicated that once she gets feedback from the farms with specifics on what they want to do and how they want to be represented in the advertisement. Lottaroc is going to a garlic presentation, but only once at 9:00 am. Others are willing to be open for several hours. Hayward Farms will be offering orchard tours. When the various farms are open, we will need to supply manpower to register people when they come and to stamp or punch their passports

to show they have been there. For insurance purposes the town needs to know who attended which events where in case of a claim of injury against the town. Ms. Pobuda inquired if there will be one central location. Ms. LaPlante stated that it will need to be at each farm location. We will need at least eight different people and possible different shifts at locations that are open for several hours. She noted that today when she met with Brodie Park.org, they were showing her a Google Sheets app when they did their restaurant crawl where they could all access the sheet to update once the people had been entered at one location their information would be in the sheet.

Ms. Lloyd noted that she will not be in town that weekend and sounds like more manpower than the EDC has. She wondered if the library's teen group might be interested in helping especially since they are very tech savvy. Ms. Ventre noted that the new BSA girls troop and the Boy Scouts could also be asked for support. Ms. Ventre will reach out to Alesia to ask for their help. Mr. Burdick will ask the Library's teen board.

Ms. Gunning asked if Ms. LaPlante could also get a price on printing posters when she obtained a price quote for the passports. Ms. Lloyd asked if we could do one poster for all three events. Mr. Burdick asked who would name the weekend. Ms. LaPlante stated she believed it would be us.

Ms. Pobuda inquired if this is the naming discussion. She noted that we have a tradition of New Hartford Days and she would like us to keep that name.

Ms. Toro noted that there are apps which could incorporate a bar code to simply scan the bar code when guests arrive at a location to check in – although she noted she is not certain of the cost. Ms. Lloyd pointed out that all members of a party need to be registered, not just one check-in per party. Mr. J. Casey noted that he would be surprised if half of those who participate actually attend all eight locations.

Ms. LaPlante noted that we need to come up with a name for the weekend. Ms. Ventre shared that Mr. J. Casey had suggested "New Hartford Your Hometown", "The Place to Live" or "Family & Friends Weekend". She then shared that Mr. Watson who could not attend had submitted "The Best of New Hartford weekend", "The Bounty of New Hartford" or "New Hartford Extravaganza". Ms. Lloyd noted she liked the Bounty. Ms. LaPlante shared "New Hartford Rising". Ms. Ventre clarified that they had talked about Collinsville Hot and how it would be nice to come up with something short and catchy like that. Ms. Pobuda shared that one of her suggestions was "Bountiful New Hartford Days" or "New Hartford Fest Weekend". Ms. Toro suggested "Farm Fest New Hartford", "Friends and Farms weekend", "Our Farms, our community, our future". Ms. Pobuda stressed that after 44 or 45 years we should keep the New Hartford Days reference. Ms. Lloyd read a number of additional suggestions from Ms. Pobuda. Ms. Gunning commented that we should keep Farm in the title. Mr. Burdick noted that the Open Farm Day might not be successful so we should choose a more general name that could evolve over time. A discussion continued of potential names for the weekend of events with a variety of suggestions. Ms. Gunning suggested "The Farms of New Hartford Weekend". Ms. Lloyd and Mr. Burdick noted that this event may evolve over time and perhaps the name should not be farm specific. Mr. P. Casey

commented that he believes that businesses in New Hartford are being excluded by having the event at Brodie Park, he would like to see an event downtown to bring people to the downtown businesses. He suggests a Taste of New Hartford type of event with a true face of New Hartford for the restaurants and the shops cordoning off the area in front of Torrington Savings Bank. Ms. Lloyd noted that the nice thing about the farms is that they are all around town so people will be exposed to different areas of New Hartford. Ms. Gunning suggested "New Hartford Day is now a weekend". Ms. Toro suggested "New Hartford Cold". Ms. Boughton suggested "New Hartford Days – Experience the Bounty of New Hartford". Ms. Lloyd questioned whether we want to use New Hartford twice. Members suggested shortening to Experience New Hartford or New Hartford Experiences. Ms. LaPlante noted that if the event is including a reinvented New Hartford Day, bountiful is not the right description. Mr. Burdick agreed with Mr. P. Casey's point that this event could morph into something different. Ms. Ventre commented that she had "Celebrate New Hartford" as an option. Ms. LaPlante asked if everyone liked Celebrate New Hartford. All members present agreed.

10. POSSIBLE COLLABORATIVE FORUMS / GUESTS

A. Promoting Businesses

Ms. LaPlante asked Ms. Ventre if she had sent out the email about the Cash Mob. She responded that she is not sure she had an opportunity to do so. Ms. LaPlante shared that Burlington is looking into setting up a Cash Mob which is like a flash mob but directed at a specific business. A discussion expressed experiences where similar events had not had a positive outcome for the businesses.

Mrs. LaPlante added that she had spoken with the New Hartford Business Council and they support a joint event in September at the Brewery. Mrs. LaPlante spoke with Chris Sayer and he felt that September 9th or 10th would work. Monday, September 9th is the regular EDC meeting night. Ms. LaPlante indicated that Ms. Ventre would do a presentation like she had done previously explaining how to sign up for the business directory on the website and ctvisit. Invitations would be sent thru the business council and to the list of businesses that Ms. LaPlante had compiled. Ms. Ventre asked if anyone had a preference for Monday night versus Tuesday night. Members agreed that the presentation should be on Tuesday. The regular meeting will be on Monday, the business event on Tuesday and the next weekend is Celebrate New Hartford.

11. CURRENT BUDGET / DISCUSSION

Ms. 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 the report did not reflect the charges for the flashlights because the bill had not been processed when she ran the report.

Members questioned what happened to the funds which had not been used in the last fiscal year. Ms. Toro asked if funds had been rolled over previously. Ms. Ventre explained that budget funds not used cannot be rolled over, they are returned to the general fund or other municipal expenses. Ms. Pobuda noted that with the number of

meetings that we missed she feels that we did well. Mr. Burdick noted that we should be more diligent in using our funds so that we justify our budget request. Ms. Lloyd noted that we had allocated \$1,000 toward the regional tourism site discoverlitchfieldhills.com. She believes we were wise not to spend those funds but that does explain the funds which were left.

Mr. Burdick asked that lines be added to the upcoming budget under printing costs for the postcard mailing, the passports and the posters. Ms. LaPlante suggested perhaps some lawn signs could be made to promote the weekend and perhaps "Open Farm" signs would be appropriate. Ms. LaPlante shared that she had raised that issue to Brodie Park.org to communicate to residents about the weekend's events. She would like to see a postcard mailing promoting all three events. Mr. Burdick requested a quote from Goulet.

Mr. J. Casey noted that Ski Sundown has some capabilities to make signs and banners. Mr. Burdick will check with Mr. Switzgable to see if they could assist us. A discussion ensued about the type of signs that would be needed.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Ms. Ventre shared that Christine Hayward has passed along an email seeking someone to serve on the Western Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mr. P. Casey indicated that he would be interested in serving on that entity. All members agreed that would be a good fit and that he should be suggested to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Gunning inquired if Ms. LaPlante had received any feedback on when the farm banners would be hung. Ms. LaPlante responded that the road crew does not have time because of summer paving work and road crew vacations. Ms. Gunning does not believe this issue should be dropped.

Ms. LaPlante added that the gardens in the downtown area have not been maintained. Ms. Toro will approach the First Selectman to inquire about these issues.

Mr. Burdick shared that Passiflora will reopen under new management as of August 1 with a similar menu.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to adjourn at 9:30 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary