

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2019 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

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

ABSENT: Alternate Robin Buzzi

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Richard Perry, Altra Industrial Motion

Chairman Meg Toro called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.
No alternates were seated as all members were present.

2. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ms. Toro welcomed new member Brian Watson to his first meeting.

3. GUEST SPEAKER – Richard Perry of Altra Industrial Motion

Ms. Toro welcomed Mr. Richard Perry of Altra Industrial Motion and thanked Ms. Pobuda for scheduling him as a guest. Mr. Perry brought slides to give an overview of his corporation. Their parent corporation is headquartered in Braintree, Massachusetts and is a conglomeration of businesses that have been acquired over the years.

He shared that the New Hartford facility is part of the electric clutch brake (ECB) division and primarily manufactures brakes. He also noted they will be bringing in another product line soon. They tend to manufacture close to where their products will be used. The New Hartford plant is located in the former Hitchcock factory and operates with two shifts. Their primary product is a spring applied brake. They do machining and assembly at this location.

Mr. Baxter asked where they find their skills. Mr. Perry indicated that they get a lot of people from Torrington and Winsted. He also noted that their number one focus is safety to take care of their staff and described a recent celebration for the longest period without an incident. Ms. Gunning asked how many of their staff are engineers. He noted that they have 6 or 7 design engineers and 4 or 5 manufacturing engineers.

Mr. Perry described a product they designed for John Deere for seeding using their clutches. He also discussed how they have relocated some of their business lines to New Hartford. Ms. Lloyd inquired if they moved business here because of the availability of space. She also inquired if access to shipping is an issue. He noted that

when they moved one product line from Illinois there was some pushback since most of their customers are in the Midwest but agreed that having space available in their current location was a factor.

Mr. Burdick asked what New Hartford could do for them that they are not doing now. Mr. Perry responded that he wished the State would get out of the way of business. As an example he commented that the State requires that employees be paid bi-weekly instead of twice a month. They pay on the 15th and the 30th and had to get special permission from the State.

Mr. Baxter asked what their employment projections are. Mr. Perry noted that they have moved out a product line but kept the staff because they are moving another business line in from a factory which is closing in Amherst, New York. Mr. Casey asked if they have enough space for their needs. Mr. Perry indicated they actually also rent space behind the brewery.

Ms. Toro expressed appreciation to Mr. Perry for his time this evening and he invited members to visit their facility for a tour.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

July 08, 2019 Regular Meeting

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to approve the minutes of the July 08, 2019 regular meeting. Mr. Watson abstained.
Unanimously approved.

5. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHLON

Ms. Gunning showed the shirt she received from the triathlon with all the donors listed on the back. Mr. Burdick commented that there had been a shipping issue and additional shirts are expected which can be given to the listed businesses in appreciation for their donation.

Ms. Gunning noted that this year we purchased 200 bananas which was really too much. 100 probably would have been enough. Ms. Gunning passed around a list of the donors who contributed this year and mentioned several new businesses that were added. She noted that she will pass on info to whoever handles it next year.

Ms. Gunning complimented Ms. Pobuda on her efforts in recruiting donors for this event.

Ms. Gunning read an email from the sponsors detailing that they had 160 participants in this year's event and already have 45 registered for July 11, 2020 next year. They could not say enough about the warm welcome they received in New Hartford.

Ms. Lloyd noted that this group seemed more interested in developing a relationship with New Hartford. Ms. Gunning noted that it wasn't as professional as the Hartford Marathon Group had been but it was a warmer and more welcoming environment.

Mr. Burdick commented that the tri-fold restaurant brochure was very helpful because they passed it out. The visitors had mostly come up Route 8 and had no idea that there is a downtown area in New Hartford. He noted that later in the day the Brewery was packed. Ms. Gunning noted that they would like to have food trucks or catering for next year. Mr. Burdick also noted that they needed volunteers.

Ms. Lloyd asked if the "welcome triathletes" signs were ever put out this year. No one could recall seeing them. Mr. P. Casey asked if the local restaurants could be asked if they want to set up booths first before asking for food trucks.

Mr. J. Casey commented that the current organizers are a for profit business and are more interested in developing a relationship as a result. A variety of ideas were discussed for next year. Ms. Lloyd commended Ms. Gunning for all that she had done.

6. BUSINESS SURVEY

Ms. Toro noted that the changes discussed at the July meeting had been made. She received the email list from Ms. LaPlante and has requested addresses from some that did not have email addresses. She has been having issues with "copy of survey" coming up when she tries to send it out which is not what we want. SurveyMonkey is looking into resolving the issue. She hopes to get it out by the end of this week.

7. UPDATE FROM TRAILS COMMITTEE

Mr. Baxter shared that the project is finally getting underway. He noted that this project started as an EDC subcommittee with Bill Bohan and Jim Brett. The Town has approved \$30,000 to match a state grant of \$150,000 to complete an engineering proposal. The RFP has been sent out and proposals are expected by September 16th. The newly expanded subcommittee will work on reviewing the proposals.

Ms. Gunning asked when will be the best time to present to the residents. Mr. Baxter indicated that public hearings are part of the RFP and will be required. Ms. Pobuda inquired about the trail being completed in phases. Mr. Baxter agreed but indicated that the entire trail needs to be planned and then funds allocated.

8. FARM DAY UPDATE/PLANNING

Mrs. LaPlante shared that she has 8 farms committed to participate on Saturday, September 14th. She noted that Ms. Ventre has designed posters, postcards and the passport to be printed. To defray the printing costs Ms. LaPlante has solicited sponsorships from the New Hartford Business Council, Northwest Community Bank

and Torrington Savings Bank for a total of \$600 paid directly to Goulet Printery. Russ's Septic is also listed as a sponsor because they are donating porta-potties for those farms who do not have public restroom facilities.

Ms. Gunning asked when the drawing will be held for the door prizes. Ms. LaPlante noted that the drawing will be held at New Hartford Day and Greg O'Brien has agreed to announce the winners.

Ms. LaPlante noted that the New Hartford Art League has asked their artists to prepare farm related pieces for the new show opening that day.

Ms. LaPlante shared that in speaking with Granby about their event, she learned that one of the challenges they faced their first year related to food availability for attendees. She had asked Mr. Watson to contact the local restaurants to see if they would be interested in offering a discount to event attendees. Due to a miscommunication, Mr. Watson had spoken to several restaurants about offering a "Taste of New Hartford" event. Although we do want to offer such an event, this is not the right time to offer it the promotion and attention that it needs. Mr. Watson indicated that he has been away for a couple of weeks, but will contact those businesses to see if they can offer a promotional discount. Ms. Ventre noted that Radwick's has agreed to offer a Buy one get one 50% off promotion and Bamboo will offer 10% off a meal. She has also approached the New Hartford Diner and Six Spoons, but they have not confirmed as yet. The Brewery will have a food truck and will offer a beverage promotion for Open Farm participants.

Mrs. LaPlante noted that due to CIRMA insurance held by the town, we will need a volunteer at each location to sign people in and obtain a signature. The volunteers need to be a member of a town board or commission. She described the process for sign-in and the possibility of tickets to save time in checking in at each location.

Ms. Lloyd inquired if a liability policy could be purchased for the day of the event. That could be investigated for future events if this is successful.

Ms. LaPlante asked for member availability for a 2 hour shift on September 14th. She passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers.

Mr. P. Casey questioned the choice of photo for the poster. Ms. Lloyd expressed that the idea was not to focus on one of the participating farms to avoid favoritism. The photo was selected as a recognizable farm image.

Mr. J Casey and Ms. Pobuda will coordinate posters downtown. Ms. Lloyd will take posters to Canton. Mr. Watson will do Burlington. Ms. Gunning will take posters to Farmington and Unionville. Mr. Watson asked about whether posters could be laminated.

Mr. P. Casey asked about media sites. He noted that Anne Hall sends out the Historical Society event to radio and television stations. He will get the list from Anne.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. J. Casey, to allocate up to \$2,000 for all the printed materials needed for Open Farm Day.
Unanimously approved.

Ms. LaPlante also mentioned the need for EDC business cards listing the new edc email address so that members can add their personal contact information when visiting local businesses. This might help with the perception that some business owners have that EDC has not visited them.

Mr. Burdick received a message from the Norfolk Farmers Market asking if EDC would like to have a booth to promote our event. Ms. Lloyd will attend. Mr. P. Casey mentioned that we should ask Collinsville if we can do the same at their Farmer's Market.

9. BUSINESS PROMOTION EVENT – September 10 – Brewery Legitimus

Ms. Ventre shared the invitation she had drafted for the business promotion event. The invitation will be sent out by email before she leaves for vacation. She noted that Brewery Legitimus had agreed to offer discounted beverages as they had done at the previous CTVisit event.

10. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Ms. Toro noted that her follow-up items were the banners. She noted that banners cannot be hung across state roadways. Members clarified that EDC had purchased farm stand banners to be hung from the light poles with photo of a CSA share and would like them swapped for winter scenes. During discussion, members questioned if EDC should offer to hire someone to install the banners if the Town crew is not available.

Ms. Toro mentioned that she had spoken with First Selectman Jerram about the garden across from Pizza Pete's and he indicated that they could not maintain the garden as it had been done previously. They will be seeking to redo the area in a lower maintenance design as they did in front of Town Hall.

Ms. Toro noted that the goals for EDC outlined at the February 26, 2019 Board of Selectmen's meeting included coordinated efforts with other Board and Commissions. She will be attending this Wednesday's Planning & Zoning Commission meeting if anyone would like to attend with her. Ms. Pobuda noted she would like to invite members of Planning & Zoning to attend our meeting. Ms. Lloyd suggested Mike Lucas, the new Land Use Officer. Ms. Pobuda will invite Mr. Lucas to attend the October meeting. Ms. LaPlante noted that Lance Perry has asked the Land Use Officer to be on the agenda for an upcoming Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. She noted that under the Plan of Conservation and Development EDC can bring suggestions to the Planning & Zoning Commission. She suggests that members of EDC attend the second meeting in September to show support.

Ms. Toro noted that another item mentioned was to review the line extension analysis and possibly we should invite the WPCA Chair to attend our meeting. That will likely be several months out as no guest will be invited to the September meeting to allow for final preparations for the Business Promotion event and Open Farm Day which are scheduled for that week.

11. CURRENT BUDGET / DISCUSSION

Ms. Ventre had emailed an updated budget report reflecting expenses paid in the last fiscal year and the recurring expenses for next year's budget. She noted that she had included printing estimates in this year's budget in order to accurately show what funds would remain.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Mr. Burdick shared that the Library received their P&Z approval and groundbreaking is planned for September 22, 2019. Central Avenue will have restricted parking during construction and parking will be in the lot behind the church.

Mr. P. Casey asked if EDC meets with any of the other area EDC members. He noted that he has a friend on the EDC in Barkhamsted and wondered if we ever compare notes.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Pobuda, second Mr. Watson, to adjourn at 9:00 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary