

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd, Alternates Bill Baxter, John Burdick and David Childs, First Selectman Dan Jerram.

ABSENT: Jim Brett, Cindy Donaldson, Mark Russo.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Bob Moore, Polly Pobuda, Selectwoman Laura Garay

Assistant Town Clerk and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre administered the oath of office to David Childs and Bill Baxter for their newly appointed terms as Alternate Members.

David Krimmel called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and commented that the Alternates need to be seated for the missing members in order to have a quorum.

1. ELECTION OF A TEMPORARY CHAIR

MOTION David Krimmel, second Shelley Lloyd to nominate Donna LaPlante to serve as Temporary Chair. Unanimously approved

2. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Temporary Chairman LaPlante confirmed that all the alternates had been seated for the three missing members.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN

Temporary Chairman LaPlante commented that she had spoken with Mark Russo about his interest in serving as Chair. She was unaware of other interest in the role until earlier today, but after reviewing the P&Z bylaws although EDC does not have bylaws as yet, she believes that the election of officers should be postponed until all the regular members are present.

MOTION Bill Baxter, second John Burdick to table the election of permanent officers until such time as all six regular members can be present.

Mr. Krimmel commented that he believes that all regular members must be present for the election whether it be a regular meeting or a special meeting and asked the Commission Secretary to confirm that all members will be present.

Mr. Baxter commented that he has reviewed the sections of the Plan of Conservation and Development and the Mission Statement from 2001 and believes that whoever wishes to be Chair should review those documents. He additionally noted that both he and Mr. Krimmel were serving on the Board of Selectmen at the time that the Mission Statement was adopted.

Temporary Chairman LaPlante called for a vote on the motion. Unanimously approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

January 11, 2016 regular meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2016 regular meeting as amended.

Mr. Baxter commented that he had recommended the Northwest Community Foundation Annual Report as a reference for our Boards and Commissions to use when seeking funding. He would like the January minutes amended to reflect this.

Unanimously approved.

5. REVIEW MISSION STATEMENT, BY-LAWS AND MEMBER VACANCIES

Temporary Chairman LaPlante expressed that this Commission has a Mission Statement but no By-Laws and there are three vacancies. She expressed that she would entertain a motion to establish a committee to review this.

Mr. Krimmel expressed that he believes that these items should be addressed when all the full members are present and the new Chairman has been elected.

MOTION Mr. Krimmel, second Ms. Lloyd, to table action on the by-laws and vacancies until a permanent chair has been elected

Mrs. LaPlante commented that she believes that the By-Laws would address the process for filling vacancies.

Unanimously approved.

6. SIGNS FOR LOCATING BUSINESSES – FOLLOW-UP FROM JANUARY MEETING – Mr. Baxter

Mr. Baxter indicated he has been working with Jeremy Schaller at the sign shop in Torrington. He has images to be shared of the concept which is similar to a design in West Hartford in front of their Town Hall.

The designs for these banners could be created through a competition in the schools or through local businesses. Locations he would propose would be on the corner of Rte 44 and Rte 219 at Riverside, at Ann Antolini School on 202, at Brown's Corner, at 202 and Cedar Lane, on Rte 44 at the town line. The process would start with a template of the base and auger down for a sleeve that the sign could be placed in and anchored. The town crew could place the bases at various locations and the sign structure is light enough it could be moved around town and the banners changed according to the season.

Mr. Baxter also shared concepts for permanent street type signs that include the Town for All Seasons motto. These signs are a bit more costly at \$368 each. He has seen similar signs in Granby on the way to the airport.

Mr. Childs inquired about the potential for the signs being stolen. Mr. Baxter indicated that is the risk one takes.

Selectwoman Garay commented that she likes the permanent type of signs that were proposed and suggests that dining and art studios be included as additional designs.

Ms. Lloyd commented that she would like to see the first of the banner signs located at the intersection of 44 and 219.

Mr. Jerram commented that the permanent type signs are not expensive. He believes that the manufacturer who makes the standard street signs could make the permanent ones for about \$75 each. He suggests that the Commission could move forward with this design.

Ms. Lloyd indicated that she likes both designs and if Mr. Jerram is correct about the pricing she would like to see this move forward. However, she would like to have specific pricing before making a decision.

Mrs. LaPlante clarified that she believes that the signs purchased by the EDC should be generic, but if businesses would like to purchase a sign incorporating the same design they are welcome to do so.

Mr. Baxter indicated that he would follow up with the First Selectman's office to finalize the pricing with their vendor. A decision would need to be made about the color of the permanent signs. Ms. Lloyd indicated she believes that the color should not be the same as the street signs.

Mr. Krimmel commended Mr. Baxter on the work that he has done to complete the assignment in a timely manner. He would like to see a formal proposal for the first sign prepared for review and approval at the next meeting.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Krimmel, for Mr. Baxter to use a portion of the funds allocated for beautification in this year's budget to have the initial sign built with assistance of other committee members as needed.

Mr. Baxter indicated that he will be away for the month of March. He asked that Cindy Donaldson work with him to ensure that this ties in with her other marketing efforts. Ms. Lloyd indicated that she would be happy to work with him as well.

Unanimously approved

Temporary Chairman LaPlante commented that there is a long list of items to be addressed and certainly item 10 is of a priority since the Roundtable discussion is next week.

MOTION Mr. Krimmel, second Ms. Lloyd to next address Item 10. Unanimously approved.

10. ROUNDTABLE INVITATION

Ms. Lloyd inquired who plans to attend as she will be out of state next week. Mr. Burdick, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Krimmel, Mr. Childs and Mrs. LaPlante indicated they will be attending.

Mr. Krimmel mentioned how he feels it is important to share that the Economic Development Commission is here to help other Boards and Commissions to meet their objectives.

Ms. Lloyd opined that she believes all the Commissions need to work cooperatively. She thinks this is a good meeting and hopes it happens more frequently than once in a blue moon. She hopes that this is an ongoing process to improve communication between the various boards and commission.

Mr. Jerram commented that there does not need to be a specific spokesperson for the EDC, that the purpose of the roundtable is to share information and processes to complete the goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Baxter inquired if there will be a facilitator. Mr. Jerram stated that Phil Doyle and his partner will be assisting in a free flowing discussion.

Ms. Lloyd noted that tonight's agenda encapsulates so many of the directions that EDC is moving toward, she believes that sharing tonight's agenda would really demonstrate what this Commission is working toward.

Mr. Jerram added that the Town is seeing an increase in economic development and grand list growth which should be a primary focus of this Commission. The EDC has a much broader scope that of the WPCA or Planning & Zoning.

Mr. Burdick commented that Board of Selectmen, Planning & Zoning and WPCA working together with EDC are the core of the focus. Ms. Lloyd noted that this is one of the few commissions that does not have a set a statutory rules to follow.

7. MAINTENANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE FOR THE TOWN

Temporary Chairman LaPlante noted that Ms. Donaldson is not available to express the positive aspects of Social Media.

She asked Commission Secretary, Debbie Ventre to share alternative solutions via the Town Website. Ms. Ventre explained the options set up for e-subscribers to enable the town send out information about town events either via sharing the Around Town page or by creating a new page for an upcoming Special Event such as the Fishing Derby. She asked for input on how the option should appear on the Subscribe to News Tab.

Ms. Lloyd suggested that instead of Home, the option should indicate Special Events. She also asked why the events option appears at the bottom of the list and asked if it could appear at the top.

Mr. Krimmel opined that the new Chair should have a subcommittee look into communication to the community as he would like to see it expanded to a much broader scope.

Ms. Lloyd shared that if another solution could not be found to maintain the social media presence she would volunteer to do so. She polled members of her family of various ages and found that many of them depend on the Facebook page to learn what is happening in town.

Mrs. LaPlante commented that while the subscription is great it only works if people subscribe and therefore any town mailings, newsletters, recreation brochures or even the dog postcards should encourage residents to subscribe.

Mr. Krimmel added that he would like to see the town send communications out to all the email lists for the library and the various groups. Various members commented that while cooperation and shared information is helpful, the town should not be responsible for broadcasting information to multiple lists as that could lead to the messages being deleted.

Ms. Pobuda shared that she has seen information on Facebook for the Business Council and wonders if they could offer guidance on sharing information. She loves receiving that information.

9. FARMINGTON VALLEY VISITOR'S ASSOCIATION

Temporary Chairman LaPlante asked Ms. Ventre to share information she had obtained from contacting the Farmington Valley Visitor's Association. Ms. Ventre passed around the information about the Farmington Valley Visitor's Association and shared that town events could be included in the monthly e-blast and newsletter if it is submitted by the 15th of the month prior. She envisioned that being important for events like the Fishing Derby. Ms. Weiner-Anstey is willing to attend a future meeting to share the benefits of membership with the Commission.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick to have Ms. Ventre invite Nancy Weiner-Anstey to the Commission's April meeting. Unanimously approved.

8. BUDGET PROJECTIONS FOR 2016 – 2017/CURRENT BUDGET BALANCE

Mr. Krimmel inquired of Mr. Jerram when he needs a submission of the EDC budget, wondering if it could wait until the Commission has a permanent Chair.

Mr. Jerram indicated that he must present his initial budget on March 12th. Ms. Lloyd commented that the next Commission meeting is Monday, March 8th. Mr. Jerram stressed that he needs the budget information prior to the 8th as he needs to finalize

his request prior to the 12th. Members discussed the budget proposal prepared at the January meeting.

MOTION Mr. Baxter, second Mr. Burdick to submit the proposed budget established at the January meeting to the Board of Selectmen. Unanimously approved.

Commission Secretary Ventre passed around copies of the current Commission budget balance report.

11. NWCT ECONOMIC SUMMIT – Mr. Burdick

Mr. Burdick shared a handout from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments program on January 26, 2016. He commented that he felt some of the presentations were very helpful in making contacts for future opportunities.

12. NEIGHBORING TOWN MARKETING & BRANDING FUNDED BY GRANT – Mr. Burdick

Mr. Burdick noted that he also had a presentation deck of slides if anyone was interested from the presentation by Mike Goman and Janet Carlson at the NWCT Economic Summit. He believes that these individuals could provide insight if invited to speak to the Commission at a future meeting.

13. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING – Mr. Burdick

Mr. Burdick shared information about the pilot of the Tax Increment Financing promoted through the legislature by Connecticut Main Street for Canton. He also offered a deck of slides on this program if anyone would like to review it.

Ms. Garay commented that all the presenters at the Summit were excellent and she would like to see some of them come to present to us.

14. NEW BUSINESS ADVOCACY COORDINATION

Mr. Burdick mentioned he would like to see what this Commission can do to welcome new businesses to town.

Mr. Jerram commented that he believes we have around 15 new businesses in town since the changes to adaptive use. He shared a draft of a proposal for a downtown site with easements for a Gateway element at the intersection.

Ms. Garay shared that she had learned at the summit that a welcome package to introduce New Hartford in partnership with the Business Council is something that the EDC could work toward.

Mr. Jerram also shared that Mr. Borghesi has been approved for his second site plan and is working on the contract for a third parcel.

15. RAILS TO TRAILS UPDATE – Baxter/Burdick

Mr. Baxter summarized that he picked up the process for the Rails to Trails project and believes the proposal prepared by Jim Brett, Bill Bohan and John Burdick is a strong start. He is meeting next week with Bruce Donald who is president of the Farmington Valley Trails Council, Chairman of the Connecticut Greenway Alliance and member the East Coast Greenway Alliance for feedback on how to make the connection with Collinsville work. He has also been speaking with Laura Gianotti at DEEP about grant funding, but she is not optimistic about our chances because they have residual applications once funds become available again.

Mr. Jerram has met with another individual for another potential source of funding with a grant application due on March 1st and Mr. Baxter believes it can be pursued. The Canton portion of the trail has some challenges in topography so a study will be needed in order to finalize the layout of the trail and how to address those issues.

Mr. Burdick inquired if the GIS previously prepared is sufficient. Mr. Jerram indicated that he needs to review the GIS to determine if it is adequate. The positive piece of this process is that they can assist with engineering to address the issues.

Mr. Burdick commented that he had spoken with Rista Malanca some time ago and Torrington has formed a not for profit corporation to file for grants that are only available to non-profits.

Mr. Baxter asked Mr. Jerram if he had measured the dugway. They would like to see sidewalks installed up through Pine Meadow to Marandino's to make it safer for people to walk. Ms. Pobuda agreed that would be nice.

Ms. Lloyd added that she would like to see walking access to the other side of the river. Mr. Jerram shared that they have completed two grants in the past month toward completing the pedestrian bridge.

16. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to adjourn at 8:49 pm; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Clerk**