

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017 – 7:00PM
NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Jim Brett, Mary Ann Gunning, David Krimmel, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd; Mark Russo; Alternates Bill Baxter and John Burdick and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre.

ABSENT: Robert Boyan, Jack Casey, Lori LaMere

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Jeremy Schaller, Kathryn Boughton (Republican American)

Chairman Russo called the meeting to order at 7:18 pm (start time delayed due to technical issues with projector).

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Mr. Burdick was seated for Rob Boyan. Mr. Baxter was seated for Lori LaMere

2. VISIT FROM LOCAL BUSINESS - Jeremy Schaller, Write-Way Signs

Chairman Russo introduced Jeremy Schaller. Mr. Schaller shared that he is a seven year resident of New Hartford and runs a business in Torrington. He indicated that New Hartford does not have a consistent image across the signage, letterhead and banners. He would like to see us have a progressive design that helps to identify the town and our “A Town for All Seasons” motto.

Mr. Schaller shared the Torrington branding results from the consultant that they hired out of Westport. Torrington had established a website “itshappeninghere.com”. He discussed the color scheme and font styles that were recommended for Torrington. He also shared the items that he had designed for New Hartford for the flashlights and the banners. He would recommend establishing consistency and a brand packaging for how the logo is used. Those colors and logo need to be used for 7- 10 years to establish the identity and recognition for the town.

Ms. Lloyd noted that unlike a corporate logo such as Coca-Cola we need to obtain a consensus from a diverse group of stakeholders in establishing our brand. She inquired how Mr. Schaller would recommend that New Hartford handle this. He noted that is why a large community hires a consultant to tell them what to do.

Mr. Schaller noted that he likes the hiking signage that has been added. What he believes is important is establishing a consistent image with the same color scheme and font style. It was noted that many of those signs had snapped in the recent high winds and questions were raised as to whether the signs were adequately secured to keep them stable and prevent breakage.

3. BANNER DESIGN

Mr. Schaller noted that in Winsted, they have the American Mural project and their banners were designed with different segments of the mural on one side of the banner and the sponsoring business on the other. Torrington would like to implement a number of things, but does not have the funding to do so. They hope to implement pedestrian kiosks in strategic locations with information on getting around town.

The designs that were recommended for Torrington were shared as full-color images. Pricing and life-span of this style was discussed and compared to the current banners. There are 26 locations in New Hartford which need to be replaced. Ms. Lloyd questioned if members have time to solicit businesses to cost-share replacement banners and still be able to order in this fiscal year.

Mr. Schaller offered to develop a branding design for the town, but asked for input from the Commissioners. Mr. Russo indicated that we would like to get away from the maroon and white and move toward green and white. Mr. Krimmel commented that since these banners only last a few years, making a decision tonight is not set in stone permanently. He would like to see this Commission order a green and white banner with the four seasons design.

Mr. Brett suggested building off the green and white consistent design and prepare the digital imaging banners with 3 for each season. A discussion continued about "ATownforAllSeasons.com" and Mr. Schaller noted that it would be great to include that on the banners. Since sponsorship and funding for that site need to be determined that will probably need to wait for a future order.

4. SIGNATURE EVENT FOR NEW HARTFORD

Chairman Russo asked Mr. Schaller to explain the mountain bike trails and race. Mr. Schaller explained that the Nepaug forest has challenging mountain bike terrain that attracts bikers from out of state. He has been building trails and cleaning out garbage in the forest. An issue is that there is not good parking or a clear trailhead. David Childs was working to establish a trail head behind Collinsville Antiques and most of the pieces are in place. The trail head located there instead of on Rte 202 would have tremendous economic benefits to local businesses. Mr. Schaller shared a map with plans for a trail head behind Collinsville Antiques. He'd like to see a beginner's loop close by and then would establish trails toward Ken Krohner's property where they have permission to build some advanced areas. Mr. Krimmel clarified that the pending issue is authorization to go across some of the properties to connect the trails. Ms. Lloyd questioned whether anything has been written to authorize access to the properties which have agreed. Mr. Schaller indicated that the agreements have all been verbal handshake agreements. A discussion questioned whether easements could be signed and recorded. Mr. Krimmel volunteered to contact those property owners to establish agreements for the trail connections.

5. MEDIA KIT / MARKETING / BRANDING PROPOSAL

Ms. Lloyd mentioned that in light of tonight's presentation she would like to see our funds spent on banners rather than the packages. She asked Jeremy about the cost of a label with the branding logo to apply to blank folders.

8. BUDGET PRESENTATION

Chairman Russo shared the presentation that he had made to the Board of Finance on March 28, 2017. He prepared this to show the Board of Finance members of the qualifications of the Commission members and explained what the membership is trying to accomplish.

Mr. Brett commented that an interesting benchmark would be to look at the Economic Development budget as a percentage of the total budget for neighboring towns.

Mr. Baxter stressed that the Trails project is not package ready and we need to be ready if federal funds are released. Kathryn Boughton asked Mr. Brett how much it would cost to be package ready. Mr. Brett indicated that there are currently too many variables to estimate the cost.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

January 9, 2017 regular meeting

Approval of the minutes of the January 9, 2017 regular meeting was postponed due to insufficient members present who attended the meeting.

March 13, 2017 regular meeting

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2017 regular meeting. *Unanimously approved.* Ms. Gunning, Mr. Krimmel, and Mr. Baxter abstained.

7. UPDATE – DISCOVERNWCT – John Burdick

Mr. Burdick indicated that the Northwest Hills Council of Government tabled this project and did not allocate the \$10,000 needed. Jocelyn Ayers will be contacting the State Department of Tourism to see if they could fund it.

9. CURRENT BUDGET BALANCE/BUDGET PROPOSAL

Secretary Ventre passed around copies of the current year's budget report. A discussion ensued about the cost of ordering the banners from Jeremy and how many could be ordered with the remaining funds. Some funds might need to be reserved for DiscoverNWCT if that moves forward.

Mr. Brett suggested that we evaluate his estimate in 2 weeks and decide at that time if we wish to move forward with additional banners.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Lloyd, to adjourn at 8:58 pm; *Unanimously approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

**Debbie Ventre
Commission Secretary**