

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021 – 7:00PM  
VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT:** John Burdick, Jack Casey (7:09 pm), Shelley Lloyd, Polly Pobuda, Meg Toro, Brian Watson; Alternate Bill Baxter and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre;

**ABSENT:** Donna LaPlante

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Elaine Murphy, Pam Fitzgerald, Selectman Laura Garay (7:35 pm)

Chairman Meg Toro called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.**

Mr. Baxter was seated for Mrs. LaPlante.

**2. ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Ms. Lloyd commented that she feels that Ms. Toro has done an excellent job and would like to see her continue. Ms. Toro nominated Brian Watson for Chair, Seconded by Shelley Lloyd. Unanimously approved.

Ms. Toro nominated Mr. Burdick as Vice Chair. Mr. Burdick declined. Ms. Toro nominated Ms. Lloyd as Vice Chair, Seconded by Mr. Watson. Unanimously approved.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

No public present to comment

**4. @BRODIEPARK UPCOMING EVENT – NEW HARTFORD RESTAURANT WEEK – Pam Fitzgerald & Elaine Murphy**

Ms. Murphy shared information about the Food Crawl that Brodie Park Inc planned a couple years ago. They were intending to do the event again last year, but Covid interfered. The new plans included Six Spoons and Farm River Café.

With the Covid limitations in place this year, they were thinking of doing a Restaurant Week, but have not really gotten much feedback. They would like to consider the event in 2022 and partner with EDC to help promote it.

Mr. Casey commented that he thinks it is very important that we draw attention to our restaurants. Ms. Lloyd suggested that this be revisited in May or June when outdoor dining might allow for more participation. Mr. Burdick commented that it could be linked in to Celebrate New Hartford in the Fall.

Ms. Murphy noted that they were planning for April because they thought people would be looking to get out to do something after the long cold winter. They also organize Race Around the Lake but try not to plan events too close together. She noted that the event was a 3 hour time frame and planned for a Thursday.

Ms. Lloyd suggested that they consider planning for September with the Celebrate New Hartford event when people could be outdoors. She frankly noted that she is not comfortable visiting a restaurant right now even though she has had both vaccine doses. She suspects that restaurants are not responding because they need paying customers right now to keep them afloat.

Mr. Watson suggested planning an event for July with participating restaurants offering choices of price fixed menus for the event. Mr. Casey added that there could be more than one event maybe in July and again in September but perhaps one in April would also be helpful to these small businesses. Mr. Watson noted that from the restaurant's perspective they need to purchase food to have the meals available. If the turnout is greater than expected, they may run out of food. If turnout is less than expected, they may end up wasting money on food.

Ms. Lloyd asked if this is something that Brodie Park Inc is planning to do and just looking for help. Ms. Fitzgerald noted that they haven't received responses from the restaurants. She noted that there are new restaurants in town so there is a larger pool. Ms. Murphy noted that advertising assistance would be key to making the event successful. Restaurant Week would include take out options. Mr. Casey noted that there seems to be more activity of late and he would be willing to help communicate with restaurants. Ms. Lloyd suggested that there be a carryout event in April and a patio event in August. Mr. Casey commented that it should be a personal choice to dine in or carry out in April. Ms. Murphy suggested that the choice be left up to the restaurant. Mr. Watson noted that it can be listed on the menu that the offer is available for take out only, dine in only or both.

Mr. Baxter left the meeting at 7:37 pm.

Ms. Lloyd noted that an item further down the agenda is a similar promotion. Mr. Watson noted that item can be moved up.

## **6. DINE NEW HARTFORD – GIFT CARD PROMOTION – Dan Jerram**

Mr. Jerram shared that the Board of Selectmen had been talking about possible ways to promote our restaurants. He noted that habits have changed and our restaurants don't have the revenue that they had prior to Covid. Alesia had shared a contest that she had heard about where residents submit receipts from local restaurants to be added to a drawing for gift certificates. They have committed \$1,000 from discretionary funds toward this program.

Mr. Casey noted that not everyone will save their receipt and submit it. He feels that both events could be done in tandem. Ms. Lloyd commented that some people might not want to turn in their receipt with credit card info. She suggested that the restaurants have a jar for the entries and do the drawing themselves. They could then contact the coordinator to advise who had won the gift certificate. Once every two weeks, the restaurant could hold a drawing.

Mr. Burdick asked what we need to do to advertise, social media and order DINE New Hartford signs. Mr. Watson asked if we have email addresses for the people who participated in Open Farm Day. Ms. Lloyd commented that some of the restaurants already have their own email lists. Ms. Lloyd suggested that the gift certificates be printed with DINE New Hartford. Ms. Murphy recapped that a week needs to be identified, restaurants who wish to participate and a shorter format menu on their website. Ms. Lloyd asked what had been done to reach out to the restaurants and had only received one response. Ms. Fitzgerald noted that this year the request was sent by email instead of by mail.

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Toro, to allocate \$500 toward purchasing gift certificates in addition to the funds allocated by the Board of Selectmen and allocate up to \$375 to order 25 DINE New Hartford signs and 25 posters and cardstock for gift certificates.

*Unanimously approved.*

## **5. LITCHFIELD HILLS TRIATHLON – Shelley**

Ms. Lloyd noted that they have received tentative approval to hold the triathlon on July 10th. They are looking for sponsorship. She doesn't believe that EDC should be sponsoring a for profit event and should hand it off to the business council. Mr. Burdick commented that he does believe that we should solicit gift certificates as done previously. Ms. Lloyd clarified that this is a different sponsorship than the gift certificates. The letter will be forwarded with the minutes for members to review. Ms. Lloyd believes the gift certificates should be solicited in May.

## **7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

November 9, 2020 Regular Meeting

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Toro, to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2020 regular meeting.

*Unanimously approved.*

## **8. UPDATE FROM TRAILS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Jerram shared that there are plans to try to have a hybrid meeting on Thursday to rekindle the process. It is difficult to review maps at a virtual meeting.

## **9. BUDGET PLANNING**

Mr. Burdick noted that we just spent some funds so there is up to \$875 that will need to be updated. Mr. Burdick questioned the amount of funds spent for Open Farm Day. Ms. Ventre noted that some of the items purchased can be reused. Mr. Burdick questioned triathlon support and Ms. Lloyd noted that bananas are not needed this

year or perhaps something else. Mr. Burdick suggested that the triathlon line be increased to \$200. It was suggested that the lines for decals and flashlights be combined as town promos. Mr. Burdick raised the question about why EDC was charged for the story walk when it was listed as sponsored by Recreation. Ms. Lloyd would like to support the storywalk and would like to see a quarterly event.

**MOTION** Ms. Lloyd, second Mr. Burdick, to approve the budget as amended.

*Unanimously approved.*

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

Mr. Watson questioned whether the letter from Mike of Food Town should be addressed. Ms. Lloyd asked Mr. Jerram to address a prior comment when we did not want to bring in another gas station as competition. Isn't this similar when there is another Dollar General just up the road. He noted that zoning in that area does not prohibit competition. The other Dollar General location is actually 6.5 miles up the road. Ms. Lloyd asked if a special exception is required. Mr. Jerram clarified that there are 3 parts to the approval: Architectural Review, Inland Wetlands and Planning & Zoning. Mr. Burdick commented that there are 2 farm breweries proposed for New Hartford.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** Mr. Burdick, second Mr. Toro, to adjourn at 8:50 pm;  
*Unanimously approved.*

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary**