

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020 – 7:00PM
VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: John Burdick, Donna LaPlante, Shelley Lloyd, Polly Pobuda, Meg Toro, Brian Watson; Alternate and Commission Secretary Debbie Ventre;

ABSENT: Jack Casey; Alternate Bill Baxter.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Kathryn Boughton (7:05 pm)

Chairman Meg Toro called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

A quorum of regular members was present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public present to comment

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

September 14, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION Ms. Pobuda, second Mr. Watson, to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2020 regular meeting. Mr. Burdick & Ms. Lloyd abstained.

Unanimously approved.

4. UPDATE FROM TRAILS COMMITTEE

In Mr. Baxter's absence, Ms. LaPlante shared that the Trails Committee is planning a hybrid meeting next month to display maps of the proposed trail. Mr. Jerram noted that they did a demo with their consultants and can now offer a hybrid meeting format. He mentioned that the maps are much clearer when viewed in person and the Committee really needs to be able to view the actual maps rather than virtually.

5. SUPPORT FOR NEW AND EXISTING NEW HARTFORD BUSINESSES DURING COVID

Chairman Toro asked membership what can be done to support the businesses in town. Mr. Burdick noted that the Business Council has been scheduling ribbon cuttings to welcome the new businesses to town. He noted that Grey Area Tavern will be having a ribbon cutting on November 21st at Noon and the new barbershop will be having a ribbon cutting on November 16th at 4:30 pm.

Ms. Lloyd commented that she feels our restaurants have done fairly well while the weather has been favorable, but with the upcoming cold weather it may have more of

an impact. She suggests that we pursue having articles published to spotlight New Hartford in publications to draw attention to the businesses.

Mr. Burdick commented that there is a social media blogger who has visited and spotlighted several New Hartford businesses. Ms. Lloyd noted that this might also be an opportunity to promote commercial real estate locations. Mr. Watson noted that COVID has negatively impacted the commercial real estate market. Ms. Pobuda commented that whenever she has tried to do a search to find available space in New Hartford, she only finds one space available. Mr. Watson noted that Loopnet.com is a national commercial real estate multiple listing service, but unfortunately the fees are expensive so local residential agents might not have access to upload their listings.

Mr. Burdick asked Mr. Jerram to provide an update on the parcel near the Waring Building. Mr. Jerram noted that the 100 foot wide easement for Kerin & Kerin needs to be resolved and the Town has engaged engineers to develop a solution that might be acceptable to all while bringing growth and economic development to that property.

A discussion continued about the available parcels along the Route 44 corridor.

Mr. Burdick asked Mr. Jerram what he feels that EDC can do to support our local businesses. Ms. Pobuda inquired whether there has been any discussion of making both parcels near the Waring building commercial zone. Mr. Jerram indicated that the land to building ratio would need to be revised by Planning & Zoning to allow that.

Mr. Jerram commented that our local businesses have managed to hang on because our residents have remained loyal to our businesses. Ms. Lloyd noted that we need to continue to feature local businesses on social media and promote them throughout the winter. Ms. Toro noted that she was approached by a new small business coordinator for the Northwest Hills Council of Government. That individual was not available for this meeting, but hopefully will be able to attend our next meeting.

Mr. Burdick suggested that our list of businesses be shared with the new coordinator.

Mr. Watson mentioned that he has spoken with businesses and they would like information about what services are available from other businesses in town. He would like to see a referral sheet offering local service providers. If those providers could also offer discounts to local businesses. He also noted issues with the lack of signage for businesses in the Hurley Building. Ms. Lloyd noted that signage has improved tremendously.

Ms. Pobuda suggested that a town map be created listing businesses. Mr. Jerram showed the map that was created a couple years ago with Barkhamsted and New Hartford. The company that created the previous one could be contacted to create one just for New Hartford and EDC funds could offset the cost for participating businesses. Ms. LaPlante, Ms. Ventre and Ms. Pobuda will work on developing a list of businesses for the map and contact the vendor. Mr. Watson will research a list of service businesses. Ms. Pobuda offered to help contact services that are not listed on the Town website as she would like to see them listed on the Town website Business

Directory. Mr. Watson stressed that he would like to see the list of services include only businesses who would offer discounts to other New Hartford businesses.

Ms. Lloyd asked if the winter banners could be switched back in for the upcoming season. Mr. Jerram will look into having this done.

6. 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

Ms. Toro asked if everyone had reviewed the proposed meeting schedule. Mr. Burdick noted that the dates listed 2020 and should read 2021.

MOTION Mr. Burdick, second Ms. Pobuda to approve the 2021 Meeting Schedule as corrected.

Unanimously approved.

7. BUDGET PLANNING

Mr. Burdick asked to clarify the computer printout versus the spreadsheet. Ms. Ventre clarified that the budget on the spreadsheet has been carried over the past couple of years.

MOTION Ms. Lloyd, second Ms. Pobuda to allocate up to \$250 to order 20 signs SHOP NEW HARTFORD – Red Background with white letters.

Unanimously approved.

Ms. Ventre will contact Peggy Budny to order the signs to ensure they are received prior to Small Business Saturday.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Mr. Burdick noted that his term is up December 31st and he would like to continue. Ms. Lloyd asked about filling the vacancies. Mr. Jerram noted that COVID has changed the landscape and people are reluctant to volunteer.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. Watson, second Mr. Burdick, to adjourn at 8:40 pm;
Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary