

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 – 7:00PM
VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: Donna LaPlante, Polly Pobuda, Meg Toro, Brian Watson; Alternate Debbie Ventre;

ABSENT: John Burdick, Jack Casey; Shelley Lloyd; Alternate Bill Baxter.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Kathryn Boughton (approx. 7:20 pm)

Chairman Meg Toro called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES.

Ms. Ventre was seated for John Burdick.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public present to comment

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

July 13, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION Ms. Polbuda, second Ms. LaPlante, to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2020 regular meeting.

Unanimously approved.

4. UPDATE FROM TRAILS COMMITTEE

In Mr. Baxter's absence, Ms. Ventre read an email he had sent indicating that the Trails Committee is on hold until social distancing guidelines ease so people can meet in person.

5. OPEN FARM DAY – SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Ms. Ventre shared that she had scheduled Facebook posts on the town page promoting the various farms who participated last year. She expressed appreciation to those members who had shared those posts to increase their visibility. Ms. Pobuda noted that if everyone on EDC would share the posts it would expand the reach.

Ms. LaPlante noted that she spoke to Zoning Officer Mike Lucas regarding the Farm Stand at the corner of 202 and 219. The Zoning regulations regarding farm stands require that one have 3 acres. Ms. LaPlante would like to send a letter to the Planning & Zoning Commission to reconsider that requirement and revise the existing regulation to allow for mini farm stand on less land. Chairman Toro agreed that it would be

interesting to understand the rationale behind the existing regulations. Ms. Pobuda noted that the discussion on Facebook suggested that any small stand should be revisited. She supports the having the ability for anyone who has extra produce that they have grown to be able to sell them.

Chairman Toro inquired about regulations on Tag Sales. Ms. LaPlante mentioned that she had discussed the perpetual tag sale near the water treatment plant with Mike Lucas. It turns out that person normally attends flea markets but since they are closed down due to Covid, he would be permitted to have his tag sale this year but once the flea markets return next year he would not be able to sell as he is now. Under normal circumstances two tag sales a year are acceptable.

MOTION Ms. Pobuda, second Mr. Watson to endorse submitting a request to the Planning & Zoning Commission to review the Farm Stand regulations.

Unanimously approved.

6. JOURNAL INQUIRER FALL ESCAPES ADVERTISEMENT

Ms. Toro asked Ms. Ventre to explain the Fall Escapes advertisement. Ms. Ventre shared that two years ago Mary Ann Gunning had recruited businesses to participate by purchasing business card ads for \$50 each to qualify for a full page advertisement in the special fall escapes insert. She noted that due to Open Farm Day last year, this had been handed off to a member of the business council. That individual was unable to allocate time to recruit participants before the deadline. Ms. Toro will contact the Business Council to see if they would like to solicit businesses to participate prior to the September 17th deadline.

7. NEW HARTFORD DAY

Ms. Toro noted that New Hartford Day seems to have become a concert on Saturday evening. Ms. Ventre commented that she had shared Mr. Jerram's post about Celebrate New Hartford with the concert on Saturday featuring The Tradesmen.

8. MISSION OF THE EDC

Mr. Watson asked if all members had the opportunity to review the statement drafted by Ms. Lloyd and himself. Ms. Toro noted that she does not like the word augment. Ms. Pobuda questioned whether business should be plural. Mr. Watson explained the thoughts behind supporting new businesses as well as existing businesses. Ms. Pobuda questioned the term professional as limiting which organizations would be included. Mr. Watson clarified that he wanted professional as a limiting term to restrict the scope of the EDC to economic developments. Ms. Ventre questioned if there are any professional organizations in town. Mr. Watson indicated that he wanted to

include that language in case professional organizations opened a chapter in town at some point in the future. After further discussion, business was changed to businesses and professional organizations was removed.

MOTION Ms. Pobuda, second Ms. LaPlante to approve the Mission Statement as amended.

Unanimously approved.

9. 2020 / 2021 BUDGET PLANNING

Ms. Toro asked Ms. Ventre to highlight budget comments. She noted that the final numbers for last year include the banners for Celebrate New Hartford and CT Main Street dues. The only expense so far this year has been for minutes preparation.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Thursday evening at 7 pm is the Asset Evaluation presentation via Zoom. Members are asked to tune in if possible.

Connecticut Main Street is hosting Business Strategies during the pandemic on Wednesday at 10 am. Ms. Toro plans to attend.

Next meeting is October 5 – a week early due to Columbus Day.

Barden Farm Market moving into larger space with ice cream. Petricone's has opened. Brewery Legitimus is doing a booming business and the parking lot is being expanded. Mr. Watson noted that they are trying to fill the Hurley Building but it is difficult due to COVID. He shared information on the difficulties of commercial closings.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Ms. Pobuda, second Mr. Watson, to adjourn at 8:02 pm;
Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Ventre, Commission Secretary