

**Business Advisory Committee  
Special Meeting, September 24, 2018  
Town Hall South  
3 Main Street, Newtown**

***MINUTES ARE NOT FINALIZED UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BUSINESS ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE***

**Present:** Chris Hottois, Flint Ridge Development; Sue Shortt, Shortt's Farm & Garden; Dan Sorrentino, Newtown Hardware; Erica Sullivan, Castle Hill Chocolate; Carrie Swan, Black Swan Hearth & Gift Shop  
Bruce Walczak, Relocation Consultants

**Unable to Attend:** Don Drapo, Jr., Curtis Packaging; Michele Hanson, Farmhouse Restaurant; Adam Richichi, Dental Associates

**Also Present:** First Selectman Daniel Rosenthal, Christal Preszler, Wes Thompson, Helen Brickfield and two member of the press (L. Zukauskas, Voices; Nancy Crevier, Newtown Bee).

First Selectman Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

**Acceptance of Minutes:** Erica Sullivan moved to accept the meeting minutes of August 27, 2018. Bruce Walczak seconded. All in favor.

**Chairman:** First Selectman Rosenthal plans to attend each meeting and will continue to chair the meetings. The committee can appoint a member chairman, if they desire, in the future.

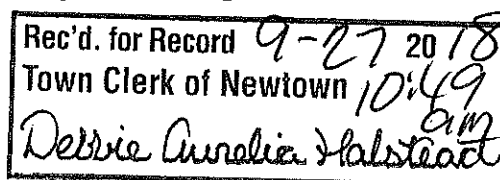
First Selectman Rosenthal said that the local press have perspective from a business networking stand point. Helen Brickfield, of the Chamber of Commerce can provide valuable information. Wes Thompson is an important connection relative to the Economic Development Commission and Christal Preszler is a town government resource. When there is news to cover relative to the commission the press will report.

Christal Preszler said that newtown.org has a business directory and businesses can add a listing via the website or by contacting Christal directly. Purchasing has directed the town employees to refer to the business directory to obtain at least two quotes when pricing work under \$2,000. The Finance Director will check to make sure this is being done. Christal spoke about how often information from one source cannot be crossed over for another use. Wes Thompson said that the Federal Trade Commission does not allow sharing of mail lists. Christal said there are system constraints making it complicated to access different data bases concurrently. First Selectman Rosenthal would like to have a broader business list.

**Special Overlay Districts/Zoning Changes:** Bruce Walczak said he doesn't have a good understanding of how the design districts work. First Selectman Rosenthal will ask George Benson to prepare a memo explaining the distinction between design districts and an outright zone change.

**Ideas/Suggestions:** The town website has a 'Welcome to Newtown' video that is currently being updated. Local businesses can have an icon to advertise their business or have the business included in the video. Dan Sorrentino said there are three levels. The icon will take viewers right to the business website. Dan thinks it's a great idea and recommends everyone take a look at it. It's a nice service and professionally done.

There was discussion about Restaurant Week. Erica Sullivan said there seems to be a disconnect between restaurants. Christal Preszler and Kim Chiapetta have visited restaurants in town, there are posters, postcards, and advertising in Hearst Media, The Bee, Voices, online facebook and constant contact. They suggest the restaurants do something special to differentiate themselves from other restaurants. Erica Sullivan asked if there could be a survey, pre or post, involving the restaurants. Christal is interested in



feedback and asked that businesses refer people to her. First Selectman Rosenthal suggested Michelle, from Farmhouse may be a good point person for the restaurateurs. Helen Brickfield surveyed Chamber members that participate. The response was Restaurant Week was very successful, because they worked it. Helen believes it should be held every year and keep pushing it. Carrie Swan asked about advertising. Christal said in addition to facebook, and media, there will be a banner on the railroad bridge. Oct. 8 – Oct. 14 is Restaurant Week; the same as CT Restaurant Week. Carrie offered to have a poster in her store. Chris Hottois asked if restaurants are encouraged to advertise Restaurant Week on their own facebook pages. Christal will check facebook pages and share information. It would be helpful if the town had shareable artwork, an image for Restaurant Week that would continue to show in people's facebook feeds. If it's on the town facebook page it can be shared. Chris Hottois suggested pulling in one or two restaurateurs to help with the organizing.

Helen Brickfield said the Chamber has a program, the third Tuesday of every month, that partners with EDC, SCORE and C.H. Booth Library. Each month there are different topics such as sustainability and the plastic bag ban. Another group, Network in Newtown, meets every other Thursday and is advertised on meet up. Different businesses in town host members and talk about their business on the third Tuesday of the month. Newtown Day is October 6. There will be sixteen plus food trucks, a brew garden and vendors from Newtown businesses. There are a lot of events that day, including Newtown Hardware Customer Appreciation Day.

Events discussion led into further discussion on the need for a community calendar. Nancy Crevier reminded people that the Bee has a calendar also and to contact her to have anything added to it. Carrie Swan suggested a sandwich board at the Monroe/Newtown border to advertise Restaurant Week to the commuters. There was a question as to whether there could be a nice billboard on town property. Kim Chiapetta coordinates the planning of events at Fairfield Hills.

Helen Brickfield said it would be nice to have a First Friday, where businesses stay open a little later and offer an added value. It takes a year or two to get going but it gets a lot of energy.

Christal Preszler said ctvisit.com is a free listing through the CT Department of Economic and Community Development. Erica Sullivan said that ctvisit has a top town list with posts offering what is going on. The search can be customized.

**Next Meeting Date:** The clerk will create a calendar of dates to share with the committee. Chris Hottois said that the First Selectman formed the committee and should be the person creating the agenda. The committee is there to help offer a business perspective.

Carrie Swan said that business number one impediment to growth is hiring and staffing and said it would be helpful if the town provided resources. Christal said that there are workforce boards, but they are buried. When there is more time she will cull down the information on the site so it's easier to navigate.

Adjournment: Having no further business report of Business Advisory Committee adjourned their meeting at 2:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Susan Marcinek*, Clerk pro-tem