

Economic Development Commission

September 17, 2019

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AT THEIR NEXT MEETING.

Present: Wes Thompson, Cramer Owen, Matthew Mihalcik, Barbara Snyder, Jeffrey Robinson, Valerie Fallon

Absent: Steve Gogliettino, Nick Roussas, Al Roznicki

Also present: Christel Preszler and one member of the press

Meeting was called to order at 7:02.

Mr Robinson moved to accept the minutes with the following correction "Under South Main Street Project Review, on the third line it should be Jeffrey" 2nd by Mr Mihalcik. Approved with correction.

6 Commerce Rd project – Mr Owen reported that we are still waiting for the state. He added that the current administration may be dropping some rules and the Army Corp may no longer be involved. He anticipates something to report at the next meeting.

Mr Thompson led a discussion of the website Home Grown Tools. This website matches towns for their commerce options. Hillsboro, NC comes up similar to Newtown. They have retained their heritage a reservoir to support their commerce. Entertainment is a form of commerce as it brings people in to support other businesses. A broad spectrum of housing is needed from affordable to high end. We will need different organizations to combine to form a stronger group to get things done, with each group sharing the work load.

SHOP meeting – SHOP has requested that the three lamp poles that were knocked down be replaced by the town. They are working on trying to lease the old Glen Road garage. Information was sent to SHOP regarding a Sustainable CT matching fund grant of up to \$25,000 which does not require a 501C3 or town assistance.

A meeting with Natalie Jackson revealed that FONS, COA and Senior Center is unable to share their lists.

Newtown Chamber of Commerce wants to work together and reorganize the Chamber's operation. The plan is to work together without relying on the other group for labor. They would like the EDC to start attending their meetings again. They want similar groups to work together such as lawyers work with lawyers, doctors work with doctors etc. There may be a way for EDC to find ways to help.

South Main Commercial – Discussion on looking into vacancies and slow moving properties to see what can be done to help. Would like to coordinate discussions with various businesses to determine the best way to help. Sand Hill Plaza is the largest taxpayer in town. Sand Hill has reported that businesses want Newtown but they want more of the center of town. Looking into the possibility of an insert into the tax bill to obtain statistics, such as number of employees.

Church Hill Rd - Exit 10 things are finishing up finally, sidewalks, signs and businesses. Lexington Gardens is flourishing. Assisted Living is coming along.

Edmond Town Hall is using their great venue to beef things up and is attracting neighboring residents to help support our restaurants. They are increasing their entertainment events.

There is a need to pull all of the events into one calendar so people know what is going on. Only thing right now is the Newtown Bee calendar. Suggestion was made for a facebook page or website having each organization uploading their hot links, library, park and rec, Edmond Town Hall etc.

Discussion on branding – 5 groups will be interviewed. 20A Glenn Rd awarded a \$30,000 grant from NVCOG to aid in the clean up. Discussing what areas need to be covered for “uber for busses”. Brew Pub Newsylum has lots of activity going on. AT&T, Starbucks and Oak Barrel are open at exit 10. Medi Spa is open at Lexington. Trees are down at FFH.

Restaurant week – posters, card, quick letter, encourage restaurant week special, on website and facebook, ads placed in the Newtown Bee, Voices and down county. 10/7-13

Monday 9/23 at 7pm in HS auditorium a presentation by 1st Selectman Dan Rosenthal regarding Fairfield Hills from purchase through today. Discussion on problems we have faced and the housing option. Please send all questions to FH@newtown-ct.gov

Ms Preszler discussed the \$11 million business incubator in Hamden. All the money was from grants turning an old school into business start ups. She spoke of a welcome center with town brochures including restaurant week, corn maze, trails and the location of town. Ms Preszler is hopeful for a full board next month to enable a photo for a press list. She is looking for suggestions for \$2500 from AARP Livable Communities. Mr Rosenthal will be joining Northern Fairfield County Realtors at 4pm in the Amber Room with our brochures. SDGB Small Cities Grant is coming up Ms Preszler will be meeting with Social Services and Nunnawauk Meadows regarding needs. A lot of things are going on Arts Fest this weekend, Carnival next weekend and the Health Fair on the 28th.

Mr Owen moved to adjourn and Mr Robinson 2nd. Approved and adjourned at 8:13.

Respectfully submitted, LeReine Frampton temporary clerk