



Minutes  
July 20, 2021  
Newtown Senior Center  
Multipurpose Room - A  
8 Simpson St

**Present:** Wes Thompson, Nick Roussas, Steve Matiatos, Barbara Snyder, Tracey Pertoso, Jeffrey Robinson

**Absent:** Valerie Fallon

**Also Present:** Christal Preszler – Deputy Director Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta – Economic & Community Dev & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

**Public Attendance:**  
Cramer Owen

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Public Participation:**

Former EDC member and Vice Chair, Cramer Owen attended the meeting to say goodbye to Commission members and express his appreciation that he was able to get to know everyone.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Barbara Snyder made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from June 15, 2021. Tracey Pertoso seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

**Economic and Community Development - Staff Updates:**

**Fairfield Hills Mixed Use Development:**

Christal Preszler updated Commission members that the Fairfield Hills mixed use project is progressing.

**Website Consolidation project:**

The project to consolidate the three existing websites, (Newtown.org, FairfieldHills.org, and NewtownSandyHookEast.com) is in the RFP process. Today, (7/20), was the last day for interested parties to submit their intent to participate. There have been many submitted questions which will be answered by Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. Proposals are due August 24<sup>th</sup>. After all proposals are reviewed, some will be invited to present. Christal asked if any Commission members were interested in participating in the selection process to let her know. Barbara asked if the proposal review and selection process would be handled the same way as the branding. Christal said yes.

**Fairfield County Commercial Brokers monthly meeting:**

Christal told everyone that she attend the first return to in-person meeting for the monthly Fairfield County Commercial Brokers Network (FCCBN) in Norwalk. In this meeting Christal was asked if the Town



of Newtown could host their July meeting, which is scheduled Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. All suitable Town locations were unavailable, so the luncheon meeting will be hosted at NewSylum Brewing. Wes said he received the email invite for the meeting which he will forward to the Commission for anyone who is interested in attending. Christal explained to the group how the Town has a great relationship with the FCCBN which recently resulted in a proposal for a Town owned property. The meeting will begin with the First Selectman speaking, then followed by FCCBN members sharing listings and closings. Christal highlighted that the goal is to keep Newtown top of mind with brokers so that when they are searching for a location they think of Newtown.

#### **Grants & CIP:**

Kim Chiappetta updated members on the EDA grant/Fairfield Hills Sanitary Sewer replacement project telling them that the design has been submitted to the EDA and Town for review. The EDA is pending grant related documents that Kim is working through now. Christal reminded members of the State Neglected Cemetery grant that was awarded for Cold Spring Cemetery in Botsford. Kim told everyone that work is in progress. Christal informed the group that there are a few other large grants in progress.

Christal continued to tell members that remediation of the 7 Glen Road and 28 Glen Road properties continues. The next steps are to get money allocated from the CIP and get bids from the State list for remediation. The Town needs to determine how far we should go with the clean-up. The planned remediation will be completed and buildings will be demolished, but there will be some sludge remaining. The level of remediation required depends upon the end use. Jeffrey asked if pollution has migrated from the contaminated properties to other locations. Christal explained that there had been some ground water testing a while ago and the State Health Department had been involved in some areas around the location. She has not been made aware of any issues.

The STEAP grant funds being used for the 7 Glen Road property will help to build an anchor for the Heritage Trail. SHOP has been raising funds for this project. The plan is to building a parking lot for the Heritage Trail parking which will also encapsulate any contaminants. Private funds will be used to build a pavilion. Conversation returned to the 28 Glen Road property and Christal explained that there are 5 to 6 buildings remaining on the property and that the Town was awarded funds from the Naugatuck Valley COG that was used to remove some contaminants.

#### **Branding:**

Christal distributed stickers and coasters that will be used to promote the new branding. The coasters have a QR code that directs people to NewtownSandyHookEats which now contains lists of restaurants, dessert options, stores, services and events. Christal told everyone that Helen Fahey, the newest member of the Land Use department, assisted. Both Christal and Wes expressed how Helen is nice, pleasant, and a big help to Economic and Community Development.

#### **Business Incentive:**

Christal told the group that the Kimball Midwest incentive has been approved, however they have not yet said if they will be bringing their business to Newtown. Members discussed Country Camper and that they closed on the 201 South Main Street property. Jeffrey said that work has already.

Barbara expressed what an amazing job both Christal and Kim are doing and that she loves the new branding. Christal and Kim thanked Barbara.



### **Member Comments and Questions:**

Tracey Pertoso asked if the EDC or Economic and Community Development department was doing any type of welcome for new businesses. Christal said that the approach is to give businesses time to open before visiting. The group discussed ribbon cuttings and Wes said that Commission members can attend ribbon cuttings and visit businesses. Steve Matiatos asked what Modzelewski's, (located at 40 South Main Street) does. Christal explained that they are a towing company who does heavy duty towing. Wes further explained that their location was formerly Amaral Motors whose owner retired and sold the business. The building is very old and requires a lot of work.

Wes asked if Lucas Local is still at open. Christal said in her last discussion with the owner they were planning to keep the Newtown location although they are opening a new location in another town. Barbara asked for an update on Sand Hill Plaza and said that a couple of people have asked her about it. Christal said that people who are concerned about Newtown businesses would be great members on the commission. Christal informed everyone that the owners of Sand Hill Plaza own 160 plazas in total and are very busy. She told the Commission that Economic and Community development continues the plaza promotions which is a short slideshow of a plaza or business area that highlights businesses, available spaces and contact information of the commercial broker. These slide shows are posted on social media and paid boosts market them to area towns and lower Fairfield County. Wes told members he spoke with a current tenant at Sand Hill Plaza who expressed that the rent should be lowered. Wes noted that lowering the rent could result in cheapening the property. Nick explained other financial reasons for not being able to lower the rent. Christal added that the management company, Edens, is willing to do things to promote the plaza. She explained the importance of extending events and activities all around Newtown to help drive people to businesses in those areas.

Tracey recommended using social media to ask people what businesses they would like to see in Newtown. After some discussion, Tracey offered to take on the task and Wes offered to assist in determining what could be done with the results and to answer any questions. Christal thanked Tracey for offering to take on this task. Wes explained to the Commission that extending the sewer system on South Main Street would help to promote economic development in that area and allow for more types of businesses. Christal added that extending the sewer would be a good use of ARPA funds.

Nick shared with the group that he has seen some movement at Kings. Members expressed their hopes there will be a resolution soon.

### **Executive Session:**

The Chairman asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session inviting Kim Chiappetta and Christal Preszler for the purpose of discussing the potential sale of town owned property.

Barbara Snyder so moved. Steve Matiatos seconded. All in favor.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 7:52 p.m.

The Commission returned from Executive Session at 8:21 p.m.



**Chairman's Closing Comments:**

Wes told members the bylaws allow for members to join meetings by phone if they are unable to attend in person.

Wes informed members that Jim Maguire has sent his resignation from the EDC. Members discussed the existing opening from Cramer's leave and now the new opening from Jim's leave. Wes reminded members that many will be coming up for renewal and encouraged everyone to remain on the Commission.

Members again discussed ribbon cuttings for new businesses as well as existing businesses who may have remodeled, or are expanding their business.

Barbara noted that the Town decided to not opt in to allow a marijuana dispensary. Wes explained that once a Town opts in it is unable to opt out, and that only 1 dispensary is allowed per 25,000 people.

**Adjournment:**

Wes asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Barbara made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. and was seconded by Jeffrey.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*