



## **Economic Development Commission**

### **MINUTES**

August 16, 2022

Newtown Municipal Center  
Shared Meeting Room 3  
3 Primrose St

**Present:** Jeffrey Robinson, Barbara Snyder, Bruce Walczak, Nick Roussas, Valerie Fallon

**Absent:** Fran Pennarola, Peter McLoughlin, Tracey Pertoso, Steve Matiatos

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

### **Public Attendance:**

Alexa – Health Ecology Yoga Systems

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

### **Public Participation:**

Alexa introduced herself to the Commission as owner of Health Ecology Yoga Systems. She asked the EDC questions regarding Land Use has meetings. It was explained that Land Use is a town department and does not have commission meetings.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

Only one Commission member in the meeting was in attendance at the July 19, 2022 meeting, so the minutes could not be approved. Approval of the minutes was postponed to next month's EDC meeting.

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

#### ***Fairfield County Commercial Brokers Network (FCCBN):***

Christal Preszler began by telling the Commission that the town will be hosting the Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> Fairfield County Commercial Brokers Network meeting. Barbara Snyder said that she has attended other FCCBN meetings where they had energetic and engaging speakers, and that she would like to see the same at the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### ***Fairfield Hills Mixed Use:***

Christal updated the group on the Fairfield Hills mixed use project. The Legislative Council will be considering the historic designation of the Fairfield Hills campus in their meeting scheduled Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. Members discussed the support of the historic designation application.

### **Events:**



Christal shared with the Commission success of the *Business Networking Happy Hour* held at Reverie Brewing. She thanked Jeffrey, Barbara, Peter and Kim for their assistance at the event. Good, positive feedback has been received. The department is considering a pop-up shop with the C.H. Booth Library in November. Valerie Fallon added that she attended the August 3<sup>rd</sup> library pop-up as a business owner and felt it went well. Christal said that Economic and Community Development was a sponsor of the pop-up so she also attended and found the event to be full and vibrant. Valerie said she finds pop-ups are beneficial because they are awareness generating.

***Business Visits:***

Christal told the Commission that she and Kim visited *Therapeutic Massage and Healing* during the soft opening of their second location at 32 Church Hill Road. Each room has a theme all of which are relaxing. They will be honoring Avance Spa gift cards for certain services. Contact them for details.

Christal informed the group of Scutter Smith's passing, and expressed that condolences go out to the family and the Newtown Bee. Scutter was a big part of the community. The Newtown Bee continues under management of Scutter's family.

***Greater Danbury Chamber meeting:***

Christal told members that Economic and Community Development and the EDC chairs will be meeting with the Greater Danbury Chamber to learn about structuring and plans. Barbara told everyone that she attended the chamber event at Market Place. She expressed the event was well done and she was glad they had it in Newtown. Members discussed the potential for the combined chamber.

***Restaurant Week:***

Christal announced that *Newtown – Sandy Hook Restaurant Week* is being held Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> through Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup> and will be the same as the prior year. Kim Chiappetta noted that this year they are working with the Edmond Town Hall and hopes to promote the town not only for restaurant visits, but for visitors to stay in town for shows, shopping and services. Barbara recommended more options for marketing that have been successful for the Arts Festival.

***Arts Festival:***

Barbara announced the Newtown Arts Festival runs Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Christal added that Economic and Community Development is partnering with Cultural Arts and the Restaurant Week banner will be hung at the festival. Barbara highlighted that between 26 to 27 of the artisans are Newtown home-based businesses. This year's festival will have more artisans than prior years. In total, 40 towns are being represented.

***Sponsorships:***

Economic and Community Development is sponsoring *Rocking the Hook* in Sandy Hook, and the Labor Day Parade.

***Website Consolidation project:***



Kim provided an update on the website consolidation project. She will be scheduling a meeting with the town team to discuss SEO content, and has been working with Park Group on the site map and the town's GIS Specialist on the database and map.

***Businesses:***

Christal informed the Commission that Fruits & Roots at 125 South Main Street closed. The new business owner is opening a juicing store and is interested in supporting locals. Nick noted that a juicing store will also be opening in the former Café Espresso location. The group discussed Sand Hill Plaza's updates to interior vacant spaces.

**Member Comments and Questions**

**6 Commerce Update:**

Jeffrey provided an update in Fran's absence and reported that not much is happening on the 6 Commerce project. It is expected that the driveway will be cleared in the next couple of weeks. The developer is still working on re-design.

**Member Project(s) Update:**

***Strategic Plan:***

No update. Members discussed next steps.

**Business additions resident feedback (cont'd):**

No update.

**Vacant commercial space and Business Zones Observations:**

No update.

**Other Commissions Observations:**

Barbara told everyone that she attended the Rings End paint store ribbon cutting. Bruce brought to everyone's attention that the Wheeler Shopping Center is now fully leased.

**Chairman & Vice Chairman Report/Comments**

No update.

**Adjournment:**

Jeffrey asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Bruce made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. and was seconded by Barbara. All members in favor.

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*