



Economic Development Commission

MINUTES

November 15, 2022

Newtown Municipal Center
Shared Meeting Room 3
3 Primrose St

Present: Bruce Walczak, Nick Roussas, Fran Pennarola, Barbara Snyder, Steve Matiatos, Tracey Pertoso, Valerie Fallon, Peter McLoughlin

Absent: Jeffrey Robinson

Also Present: Kim Chiappetta – Economic & Community Dev & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

Public Attendance:

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Public Participation:

None.

Approval of Minutes:

Fran Pennarola made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from October 18, 2022. Barbara Snyder seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Vote on 2023 Meeting Calendar (Refer to attachment A):

Kim Chiappetta distributed the draft 2023 EDC meeting dates.

Fran Pennarola made a motion to accept the 2023 EDC meeting calendar. Valerie Fallon seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Economic and Community Development - Staff Updates

Website Consolidation project:

Kim informed members that work continues on the website consolidation project with SEO content, the Business Directory and map, and photos in progress.

Projects (45 Main St, Heritage Trail/7 Glen Rd, 28a Glen Rd and Fairfield Hills mixed use):

Kim updated that all projects are moving forward. The portion of the Heritage Trail project associated with the STEAP grant has been awarded to ARS Inc. (Asphalt Repair Solutions Inc.).

FH Mixed Use:

Kim explained that they are still working through historic designation map.



The group then discussed Everwonder Children Museum's interest in Newtown Hall.

Lastly, Kim told members about the ribbon cutting for Around Town Real Estate LLC located on Church Hill Road.

Member Comments and Questions

6 Commerce Update:

Fran had nothing new to report. The town is still pending a revised site plan.

Member Project(s) Update:

None.

Business additions resident feedback (cont'd):

Barbara informed the group the Dr. Joe Young, optometrist, has sold business and is retiring. She then told the group that while dining at Tamarind she spoke with staff and found that their business does quite a bit of take-out. Tracey added that Sandy Hook Café is now open. Valerie told the group that Quatro Osteria is now open. Members also discussed that Perfusion Bar now has their sign up, and that Rings Ed is doing well. Nick noted the improvements being done to Sand Hill Plaza including re-roofing, painting, and signage. All members agree that that the work being done by the new owners was improving the look of the plaza.

Vacant commercial space and Business Zones Observations:

none

Other Commissions Observations:

none

Chairman & Vice Chairman Report/Comments

Strategic Plan for Economic Development (Refer to attachment B):

Fran began the conversation reminding members that he and Bruce began by updating a draft document from 5 years ago. The Commission then reviewed the draft document and made some revisions. The review will be continued in the next EDC meeting in December.

Adjournment:

Barbara asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Nick Roussas made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. and was seconded by Tracey Pertoso. All members in favor.

Newtown Municipal Center
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT
www.newtown.org



*Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*

NEWTOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER
3 PRIMROSE STREET
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT 06470
TEL. (203) 270-4276
FAX (203) 270-4205



NEWTOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING DATES – 2023
(AND JANUARY 2024)

Time: 7:00pm
Day: *3rd Tuesday of each month
Location: *Newtown Municipal Center
Shared meeting room 3
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470

February 21

March 21

April 18

May 16

June 20

July 18

August 15

September 19

October 17

November 21

December 19

January 16, 2024

*Unless otherwise specified on the agenda.

*Google Meets will be held when in person meetings are not possible.

Reformatted Version

(pmcl,10.21.22)

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Town of Newtown, Connecticut

Prepared and approved by the Newtown Economic Development Commission on mm, dd, 2022

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

STAFF

INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan for Economic Development of Newtown, adopted by the Economic Development Commission sets forth a guideline for continued economic growth and expansion in the community. It provides objectives, strategies and actions for successfully achieving three (3) major goals. Its' primary focus is to expand the tax base with controlled commercial, industrial, and higher density housing developments while maintaining the New England charm and character of Newtown.

The Town strategic plan, as approved by the Legislative Council, charged the EDC as follows: The Economic Development Commission for the Town of Newtown will seek to implement orderly and planned economic development while always keeping in mind the character of the town. We will seek to involve all the agencies, commissions, boards and departments in Newtown which are involved in, or affected by, economic development as well as the people of the town in their work to promote economic development." That mission has not changed. (See Newtown Ordinance #66).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

The EDC Strategic Plan supports the desire for a diverse and vital economy that recognizes the many groups that contribute to the community vision of Newtown. This vision is neither easily balanced nor in alignment with budget allocations, current or future. Newtown must take a stronger long term investment posture going forward. The Plan attempts to incorporate a variety of desires while placing emphasis on areas that will improve the tax base ratio for residents. That requires the encouragement and facilitation of commercial taxpaying assets. so that mill rates can be reduced or future increases limited.

MAJOR GOALS OF THE PLAN

Business Retention, Expansion and Outreach.

- Develop programs, systems and projects to encourage, expand, and improve economic climate.
- Support and retain existing businesses while attracting new businesses.
- Create a more diversified and balanced economy with greater revenue generation potential.
- Develop and support marketing awareness programs, job creation, and a broader range of goods and services for residents and visitors.

The 7 business districts that have developed over time in Newtown have characteristics that enable further growth and density in varying degrees.

District(s) Enhancement. Newtown's large geographical area has resulted in the growth of dispersed commercial activity. The Borough, Hawleyville, Sandy Hook, South Main Street and Fairfield Hills are five core business districts. We intend to continue to enhance these districts as vibrant social, cultural, and entertainment centers and/or important retail and business districts.

Community Enrichment.

A diverse range of cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities serve the needs of residents and attract new businesses.

- Promote Newtown's high quality of life by supporting those opportunities that will help expand the local economy.
- Support the expansion of Newtown's visitor attractions and tourism.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND PLANNED TACTICAL ACTIONS OF THE PLAN

Limited available resources inhibit our ability to completely address all of our goals with active programs every year. It should be emphasized that our seven objectives are closely integrated. Objective Two through Five, especially, will have a direct impact on achieving Objective One. The commission continues to pursue seven major Objectives in order of perceived importance:

Objective 1.

We aim to reduce the burden of taxes on individual homeowners by increasing the commercial/industrial assessment portion of the Newtown Grand List

Strategy: The EDC must engage with decision makers to rally support for this objective and actively promote the development of commercial and industrial properties. Commission members can advance these ideas by marshaling the support of land use boards, industry leaders, civic groups and the public.

Tactical actions:

- Provide smooth communications and problem-solving procedures, by facilitating direct links between businesses and appropriate town officials, designed to make business growth as easy as possible.
- Remove roadblocks to this strategy through communication with other boards, councils and commissions.
- Facilitate direct links and communication by using the EDC website as an information portal.
- Develop an outreach program to new and existing business to be managed by the office of the Economic and Community Development.
- Work with other town departments to find viable ways to expand the availability of sewers to commercial properties
- Follow submissions to Planning & Zoning and Water & Sewer Authority for Economic Development impact.
- Support the development of appropriate high density housing to attract and retain younger and aging households
- Participate in regional marketing and recruitment efforts with Housatonic Valley communities
- Participate with other State organizations (such as HVCEO, CERC and CEDAS) to be aware of businesses looking to locate in CT and encourage Newtown as their best choice.

- Provide initial tax incentives to ensure that Newtown is first choice.

Objective 2. Support and promote the economic development of commercially zoned town owned properties and facilitate lease/sale options.

Strategy: Recognize the growth potential of Newtown’s commercial properties and promote their development.

Tactical Actions:

- Bring acceptable businesses: commercial, educational institutions and non-profit organizations to a portion of the Fairfield Hills Campus as approved in a 2011 Fairfield Hills Master Plan and/or later revisions.

Objective 3. Provide new businesses and other commercial endeavors with incentives to develop vacant private tracts of land

Strategy: Assist in bringing suitable new businesses or expanding businesses into existing vacant commercial and industrial spaces.

Tactical Actions:

- Work with commercial business owners to help match owners with potential buyers or renters
- Continue promotion and marketing programs including frequent updates of EDC Web site and e-mail blasts to brokers and potential developers.
- Increase abilities to quickly respond to multiple inquiries with direct, personal contacts. Put a system in place whereby staff responsibilities for rapid response to multiple inquiries are clearly assigned and tracked.
- Continue the targeted marketing campaign as recommended in EDC’s Market Assessment Report with follow-through and rapid response.
- Continue to work with property owners and the town’s administration to put all appropriate properties with land use approvals in place into CERC’s Quick Tracks Program.

Objective 4. Increase the development potential of existing commercial and industrial properties by enhancing opportunities for economic growth within these areas. Explore opportunities for expanding into new areas where commercial and industrial development would be appropriate.

Strategy: Expand business/industrial zoning districts to incorporate more properties without negatively impacting residential areas. Increase the density/development potential of existing business/industrial zones where appropriate.

Tactical Actions:

- Continue to collaborate with local and regional organizations, owners and brokers to enhance opportunities that will advance mutual long-term goals.
- Investigate and encourage regional medical services; high tech industries; locally-owned and serving retail; environmentally clean businesses and other targeted industries to locate in Newtown. Explore opportunities for working with other area towns to cooperatively further our economic development goals. (Example: Brownfields Partnership funds to clean up targeted properties that are contaminated and underutilized.)
- Explore performance zoning (wider range of land use without negative impacts) or village districts that will enhance the development potential of industrial and commercial land while at the same time preserving Newtown's character and residents' core values for the community.
- Foster ongoing reviews of zoning regulations and infrastructure investment to support economic growth in such districts as a responsible strategy to strengthen these important community assets.

Objective 5. Retain and nurture existing enterprises in Newtown by identifying their requirements to encourage their growth. This will extend from small to large businesses.

Strategy: Establish the EDC and the Economic and Community Development office as the primary contacts for existing businesses. Develop a business retention and expansion program to preserve such businesses and assist in their growth.

Tactical Actions:

- Continue to enhance communications between the Newtown government and the business community, including small business owners, property owners, the Chamber of Commerce, realtors/brokers, bankers, and other business focus groups.
- Participate, facilitate or coordinate small business seminars.
- Support and assist the Chamber, SHOP, and Hawley Business groups
- Develop a “Welcome” package for new and potential businesses that includes guide lines and an inventory of available services to help them be successful.
- Investigate potential options for developing a business incubator that will nurture existing and potential home-based enterprises. Present near-term and long-term options which may include alternatives such as a bricks-and-mortar incubator or a virtual Web site or a “business hotel” where businesses can work and have central services provided by others. As an alternate consider a possible affiliation with a library, regional college and/or university.
- Partner with public sector agencies and groups to support existing and new entrepreneurs.
- Develop Internet newsletters that provide information about available grant funding opportunities, new business announcements, seminars, and other topics of interest.
- Focus on various niche types of businesses such as Marketing, Web-based services, Agriculture, Artisan food enterprises and Craft programs and their needs.
- Expand the usable list of e-mail addresses for Newtown businesses to enhance communications between customers and services fostering their operational and growth goals.

Objective 6. Continue to serve Newtown’s existing commercial base.

Strategy: Support a “Marketing Newtown” effort in cooperation with other business-oriented groups.

Tactical Actions:

- Build on such events as Newtown Restaurant Week with other special events that coordinate with current town and civic club events. Market and promote Newtown’ culinary diversity.
- Maintain an outreach to organized citizen groups such as SHOP and the “Farmer’s Market” community to provide support and maintain an open door relationship.
- Promote a “Buy Newtown” campaign as an effective means to support local businesses by bringing them to the attention of residents and workers.
- Develop a business-to-business matrix.

Objective 7. Enhance the perception of Newtown as a Destination

Strategy: Support and collaborate with Cultural, Historical, Business, and Recreational organizations to market Newtown’s quality of life, diversity of experiences, and central regional location.

Tactical Actions:

- Develop plans and partner with the Arts Commission and other cultural groups to expand revenue generating activity.
- Investigate the appropriate use of Fairfield Hills to maximize significant cultural development
- Create brochures and augment the EDC website with information that highlights shops/restaurants/recreational and cultural activities.
- Work with the Chamber and Business Districts to produce guides, general information and other marketing materials geared toward visitors.
- Work with the Chamber and other business organizations to market and host special events
- Collaborate with Town Commissions and community groups to address signage and circulation issues of mutual concern/benefit
- Support efforts to promote significant cultural and historical aspects of Newtown.
- Support the Parks and Recreation Department by promoting Newtown’s numerous recreational amenities, diverse athletic programs, and active lifestyle as a supporting component for business development and expansion.