



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2021

This meeting was held remotely due to COVID-19 mandates and precautions.

Present:

Wes Thompson, Barbara Snyder, Nick Roussas, Valerie Fallon, Jim Maguire, Steve Matiatos, Cramer Owen, Christal Preszler – Deputy Director Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta – Economic and Community Development & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

Absent:

Jeffrey Robinson, Tracey Pertoso

Also Present:

Layne Gregoire and Logan Gregoire – Country Camper

Public Attendance:

None.

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

Public Participation:

None.

Approval of Minutes:

Barbara Snyder made a motion to accept the minutes from February 16, 2021. Steve Matiatos seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Economic and Community Development - Staff Updates:

Business Incentive Request – 201 South Main Street (Refer to attachment A):

Christal Preszler began by thanking Layne and Logan Gregoire of Country Camper for attending the meeting.

Christal shared a presentation in which she first told Commission members that Country Campers is looking to build a facility for the sale and maintenance of recreational vehicles and automobiles at 201 South Main Street. She reminded members that at this point everything is preliminary and it is the first step in the process for Country Camper to determine if they will establish themselves in Newtown. Christal noted that the 218,000 square feet will remain paved and they are planning to employ between 15 – 45 employees. This is a competitive situation with other towns in CT. She continued to present information including the location of the property, the previous property and structure stats and examples of what the building may look like. Christal told members that 201 South Main Street is the former location of Blue Linx and prior to that Georgia Pacific and has been vacant for about 10 years.

Christal then handed the meeting over to Layne and Logan. Logan Gregoire introduced his father, Layne, and himself and thanked the Commission for meeting with them. He told the Commission how



his parents started the business with the Vermont location in 1996, and opened a second location in New Hampshire in 2018. With their commitment to strong customer service, they opened a stand-alone service facility down the road from the Vermont facility. They sell, service & maintain recreational vehicles. Logan noted that the recreational lifestyle has become more popular especially with the pandemic. They have a growing customer base in CT and the surrounding area so they are considering CT for their expansion. They are one of the larger volume dealers in the northeast and are planning to expand nationally. Logan continued to tell members that they have partnered with Claris Construction to show commitment to Newtown and to CT. Logan commended Phil Clark and all of Claris Construction. He noted that “*Why Newtown?*” has been a question that has come up often. Logan explained that based on the town’s geographic location it fits in with the Country Camper customer base and point of service. They have also heard great things about the town, and appreciated meeting with the First Selectman. Logan told the Commission that they are before them asking for a tax incentive as Country Camper would be a job creator and are planning to invest around \$7 million dollars. They will be investing in the town and ask that the town invests in them. Layne added that this will be a great opportunity for everyone and expressed the importance of tonight’s meeting for Country Camper to move forward.

Christal then reviewed the financials slide. Country Camper is planning to invest around a total of \$7 million dollars. The current assessed value is \$1.2 million dollars which results in \$43,000 taken in as real estate tax revenue. The estimated assessment is \$5 million dollars which is an increase of \$3.8 million dollars resulting in \$173,000 in real estate taxes annually. Newtown’s business incentive program allows them to be eligible for a 45% abatement on the real estate taxes, and a 1.15% multiplier for personal property bringing their abatement percent to 51.75%. She reminded members that the abatement is only on the incremental increase in real estate taxes. The base will remain taxed at 100%, so the town will never receive less in taxes than it does today. Christal explained that the process to approve the incentive begins with tonight’s EDC meeting. If the EDC moves the incentive forward with a positive recommendation, the next step in the process would be the Board of Selectmen meeting. After that, the incentive would be reviewed by the Board of Finance who can only make a recommendation. The final step would be the review by the Legislative Council. She then displayed a graph that illustrated the numbers she presented earlier.

Member Comments and Questions:

Wes recommended members visit the Country Camper website to see how the company serves their communities, and then opened up to member questions. Wes then noted that this business will attract more people to that area of town and to Newtown in general.

Barbara asked if they would be custom fitting campers and expressed that she has been interested in the camper/RV population since the pandemic. Logan said they do not get into the specialization but do have factory trained technicians who can make some modifications. They sell from travel trailers to class A, B, C and pop-up. They try to hit every price point so there is something for everyone. Barbara expressed how Country Camper is a really nice fit for Newtown and noted the location being a good fit for their business.

Jim Maguire asked how they are prepared to deal with an economy that is fragile. What happens if there is a recession? Layne answered that they have been through recessions before. They are unique in the products they carry and people travel far distances to seek out their brand. Logan added that



Country Camper made it through the tough times in 2008 which was a difficult time for the recreational vehicle industry. They remained profitable that year and were able to gainfully employ their people, as was the same with March of 2020 when they were in a 2-month shutdown.

Steve Matiatos asked Wes if the property had the same owner during the entire time it was vacant, and asked if it has been for sale throughout. Wes replied that the property has been for sale and Christal added that there was a change of ownership over that period. Steve then asked Layne and Logan about their market analysis and what type of reach is expected to come from outside of CT. Logan gave an example of a customer driving 6 hours up from New Jersey to their Vermont location. It is expected that they will draw customers from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Steve asked about their involvement in communities where they have locations. Layne told members of times where Country Camper has donated Christmas gifts for children, donated to cancer organizations and contributed to the Make-a-Wish foundation. Logan added that when COVID came out they reached out to state and local organizations and came up with a deal with the State of Vermont where they rented out at a discount 27 trailers for the homeless. When the contract ended with the state there was still a need so a trailer was donated including some maintenance coverage. This was a great opportunity to give back to community.

Valerie Fallon asked if they work with Claris and come to Newtown, do they have an idea of the timeline from construction to open. Logan said it depends upon how conversations go. He continued to explain that the business needs to be open at the beginning of 2022, so they need to move expeditiously and break ground soon. The reason for this is because they sell more than 1/3 of the campers from January through March. Valerie then asked, tax incentives aside, if there are any particular challenges with Newtown. Logan replied that it's sincerely been a pleasure dealing with Christal, the First Selectman and Phil Clark and all of Claris Construction. Wes told Layne and Logan of Newtown's fast track approval process and doesn't believe they will encounter any difficulties. Wes noted that this project will employ between 15 – 45 people as well as the number of employees during the construction.

Wes asked for a motion to end the formal presentation period.

Valerie so moved. Nick seconded. All in favor.

Questions within the commission:

Wes asked members if they had any questions for the EDC or Christal. Barbara asked if Newtown is competitive with the other towns Country Camper is considering. Wes explained that due to the nature, these are private conversations; however he does feel that Newtown is competitive.

With no further questions, the Chairman closed the discussion.

Wes asked for a motion to support the request for the business incentive as presented for Country Camper for 201 S Main Street.

Barbara motioned. Jim seconded.



Wes then asked for a roll-call vote, those in favor please say *aye* and those Opposed say *nay*.

Jim Maguire	Aye
Barbara Snyder	Aye
Valerie Fallon	Aye
Nick Roussas	Aye
Steve Matiatos	Aye
Cramer Owen	Aye
Wes Thompson	Aye

The motion passed with unanimous support.

The Chairman stated, *"Let the record show that the Town of Newtown Economic Development Commission voted in support of the business incentive requested by the Economic and Community Development Department for Country Camper for 201 South Main Street."*

Chairman Closing Comments:

Wes encouraged members to visit the County Camper website.

Adjournment:

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Barbara Snyder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. and was seconded by Jim Maguire.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk*

Newtown Economic Development Commission Special Meeting March 10, 2021

Country Camper

Layne Gregoire
Logan Gregoire

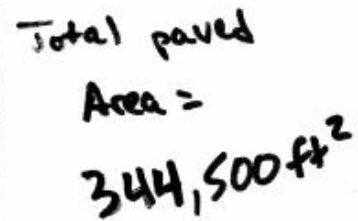
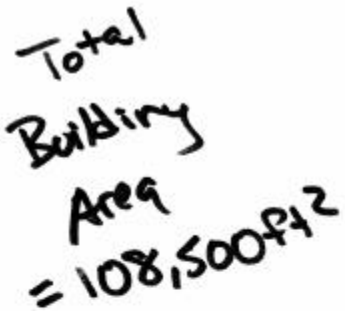
- Sales/maintenance of recreational vehicles and automobiles
- Construction of a 31,329 square foot building
- 218,000 square feet of paved area
- Anticipate 15 – 45 employees to be hired for operations
- Competitive situation with other CT towns

Current Google Maps photo of property – 3/10/2021



Note: Newtown Transfer Station and cell tower

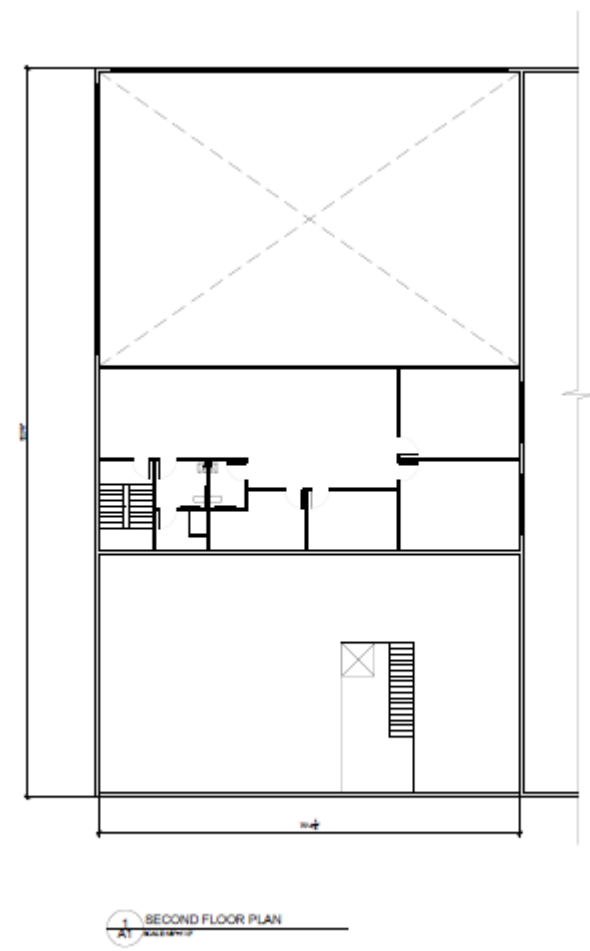
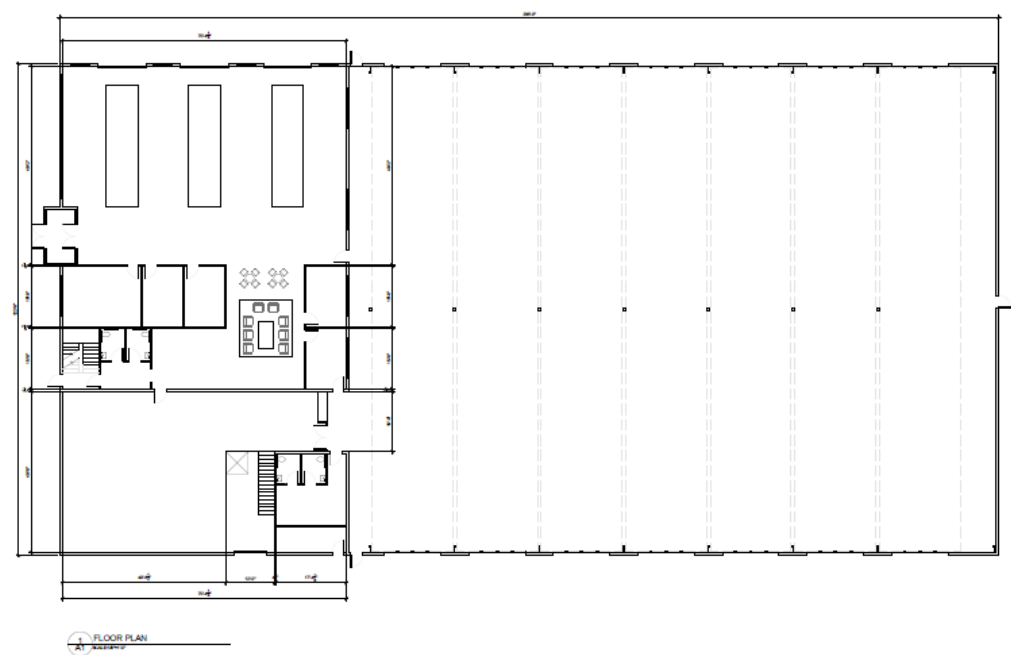
Previous structure/property stats







Preliminary Floor Plans



Address	Grand List 2019 - Real Estate Assessment	2019 Existing Real Estate Tax Bill (34.76 mills)	Estimated Investment (includes property purchase)	Assumed Real Property Assessment (After all Improvements are Completed)	Increase in RE Assessment (Existing vs. Post Improvements)	Assumed Real Property Tax Bill on New Assessment (34.76 mills)	
201 S. Main Street	\$1,244,750	\$43,268	\$7,151,741	\$5,000,000	\$3,755,250	\$173,800	
Total	\$1,244,750	\$43,268					
*Project Description: Country Camper proposes to purchase 201 S. Main Street and construct a camper showroom and maintenance facility with outdoor storage. Total investment: \$7,151,741. Land purchase = \$2,000,000. Construction and sitework est. \$4,663,541. Soft costs est. \$488,200 Site is 22.73 acres. Zoned M-1.							
Personal Property value estimated at \$200,000			\$6,952	Est. Annual personal property taxes			
Assume 7 years, include personal property multiplier of 1.15 due to competitive situation as described by Country Camper							
				45% abatement on RE taxes * 1.15 personal property multiplier = 51.75%		Annual Real Property Tax Due if 51.75% of the Increase in Assessment is fixed.	
https://www.countrycamper.com/							
Approval process			0.005175	TAX PAYMENT IF Abatement is awarded (51.75%)		\$106,249	Annual
EDC date	Special 3/10/21			ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT		\$67,551	Annual
BOS date	Est. 3/15					7 years	
BOF date	Est. 3/25						
LC date	Est. 4/7			Taxes Paid (7 year period)		\$743,746	
				Total Abatement (7 year period):		\$472,854	
Approvals for the Business Incentives must be given by the EDC (date voted) Board of Selectmen (date voted), Board of Finance (date voted) and the Legislative Council (date voted)							
	Mill rate assumption	34.76		Once abatement period is complete:			
Assumptions: No increase in Mill Rate over 7 year period				Annual tax payment (based on 34.76 mill rate)		\$173,800	
Incremental Real Estate Tax:	\$62,981.93	per year with abatement					
Current Real Estate Tax:	\$43,268	per year	\$106,249.44				

Town of Newtown
Business Incentive Program Application

Negotiations of Business Incentives will be conducted by the First Selectman. The findings and conclusions of the First Selectman will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for acceptance or denial. Board approved applications will be forwarded to the Finance Board and Legislative Council for consideration and action.

Name of Company: Country Camper of CT, LLC

Address: 201 South Main Street, Newtown, CT 06470

Company Contact: Logan Gregoire

Phone Number: 802-522-2771

Types of Products Manufactured or Distributed: Recreational Vehicles and Automobiles

Project Description: Creation of a Dealership

Estimated Cost of Proposed Improvements: \$7,150,000
(Attach itemized list of these costs and improvements)

Number of Jobs to Be Retained in Newtown: 15 to 45. The number may increase as the business grows.

Number of Jobs to Be Created: 15 to 45. The number may increase as the business grows.

02/14/2021 Logan L. Gregoire
Date Signature of Company Representative

Completed applications should be returned to the First Selectman's Office or the office of the Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development.

201 South Main Street Estimated Taxes

- Assumes:**
- 7 year 45% incentive with 1.15 personal property multiplier
 - Fixed valuation
 - Mill Rate = 34.76

