

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



MINUTES

April 17, 2018

Meeting Room 3 - 7:00pm

Present:

Wes Thompson, Cramer Owen, Bob Rau, Nick Roussas, Matthew Mihalcik, Amy Dent, Kim Chiappetta – Economic and Community Development & Fairfield Hills Coordinator (clerk)

Public Participation:

None

Absent:

Al Roznicki, Scott Orlando, Steve Gogliettino, Dana Trado, Christal Preszler – Deputy Director Economic and Community Development

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Matt Mihalcik made a motion to accept the minutes from March 20, 2018. Cramer Owen seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

Chairman Wes Thompson started the meeting by explaining to members that unless there is an item to vote on, each meeting will cover a topic specific to economic development and that in this meeting they would be discussing sidewalks. The next meeting will be to discuss the budget and then later meetings will focus on a high-level marketing plan and deliverables.

He then asked that Kim Chiappetta to provide the Economic and Community Development staff update.

Economic and Community Development – Staff Updates:

Greater Danbury Chamber – Economic Forecast Breakfast 2018:

Kim Chiappetta began by informing members that she attended the Greater Danbury Chamber's Economic Forecast Breakfast. The speaker was Don Klepper-Smith who is a Chief Economist & Director of Research for DataCore Partners LLC, and who served as Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to former Governor Jodi Rell. She provided the group with some highlights from the presentation, such as the State's well-known issues with having the lowest job recovery rate in New England and having the highest unfunded pension fund liabilities in the nation. On a positive note she informed the group that Mr. Klepper-Smith was impressed with the Danbury Local Area Market (LAM), which includes Newtown.



This market currently has a job recovery rate of 106% compared to the State's which is 82%. Also the Danbury LAM has an unemployment rate of 4.3% which is less than the national average.

Wes added that Christal is working on a lease for Stratford Hall on the Fairfield Hills campus, and that she was recently contacted by a larger sight finding firm.

Chairman's Report:

Meeting with Professor of Global Economy:

Wes informed the group that he, Cramer and Christal met with a PhD Global Economist, who is a professor at Fairfield University. The professor had contacted the EDC expressing her interest in providing her expertise to help the group. In a mom's only Facebook group she found another PhD who has done extensive work with a not-for-profit who was also interested in assisting. At the end of their meeting, the agreement was to collect feedback from members of the Facebook group to highlight the wants in regards to economic development. Cramer expressed that this is a great opportunity to obtain a different perspective from a demographic who is not normally vocal in this area.

Sidewalks:

Wes began the discussion of sidewalks by distributing two maps: 1) The Town of Newtown Sidewalk Plan, and 2) STEAP Streetscape Hawleyville map. (See attached.) The group briefly discussed the positive aspects of adding sidewalks to the Hawleyville area; however at this time there are no funds for the project. Amy asked if there were any stipulations for making the sidewalks ADA compliant. Wes informed Amy that there were and that existing newer sidewalks meet the width requirement for a wheel chair.

Budget:

Wes informed the group that in May and June there will be a discussion on the EDC financials. The purpose is to identify where money was spent and to identify planned spending.

He then notified the group that the Chamber will be asking the EDC for a donation, and that he has asked the Chamber to provide details as to the project that will be funded with the donation. The group then discussed the possible donation opportunities, and Cramer highlighted that it is beneficial to raise visibility of the EDC.

Friends of Newtown Seniors – Livable Communities Seminar:

Wes asked members if they were aware of the Friends of Newtown Seniors – Livable Communities Seminar. Some of the topical areas are related to housing and transportation. Wes will be participating in this meeting and will take the opportunity to identify items relevant to economic development. He



invited others to join the meeting scheduled April 28th 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Newtown High School. Sign up is required in advance as attendees will be asked to do some homework prior to this working meeting. Details of this initiative can be found on the AARP website.

Amy added that she has been attending programs that identify the benefits of having a town center. Being that Newtown is so large, she identified Newtown actually has 3 centers: Sandy Hook, Queen St, and South Main St. She added that the Fairfield Hills campus will also be another center point as it continues to develop. The group then discussed the need to provide transportation between these town centers, allowing for seniors and students to travel as well as other who prefer not to deal with the hassles of traffic or finding parking. Cramer added that Hawleyville will also become a center as it develops, and that tenants at the Covered Bridge apartment complex will be able take advantage of this service.

Chamber’s Facebook Presentation:

Wes informed everyone that on Monday, April 30th the Newtown Chamber is sponsoring the Facebook “Boost Your Business” presentation at the Edmond Town Hall. The speaker is consultant for Facebook who will be presenting tools and best practices for growing a business on Facebook and Instagram.

Vice-Chairman’s Report:

Cramer informed members that Teton Capital is moving ahead with building the assisted living facility on Church Hill Rd. He also asked members to vote on the budget next week.

Member Comments and General Discussion:

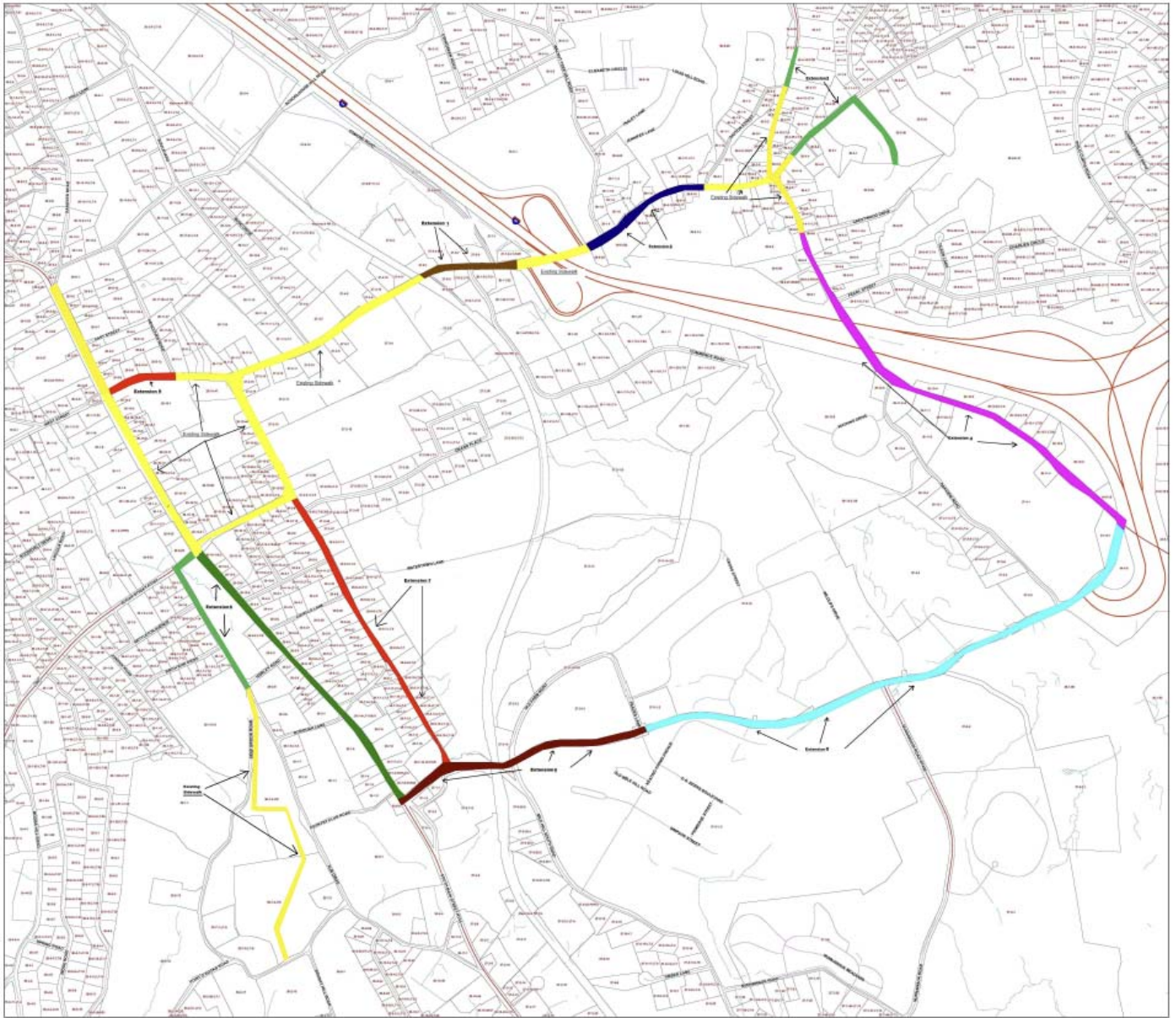
Wes asked members if there were any updates.

Bob Rau informed the group that he spoke with a property owner regarding property for sale on Church Hill Rd. The owner has 6.4 acres, part of which is on lease to a wire company that has 1 year remaining on their lease. Bob is trying to contact the realtor listed for the property to see if the EDC can provide any assistance. The discussion then shifted to the State project to align Edmond Rd with Commerce Rd. Wes will try to bring a rendering of the proposed change to the next meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by Cramer Owen at 8:07 pm and was seconded by Matt Mihalcik.

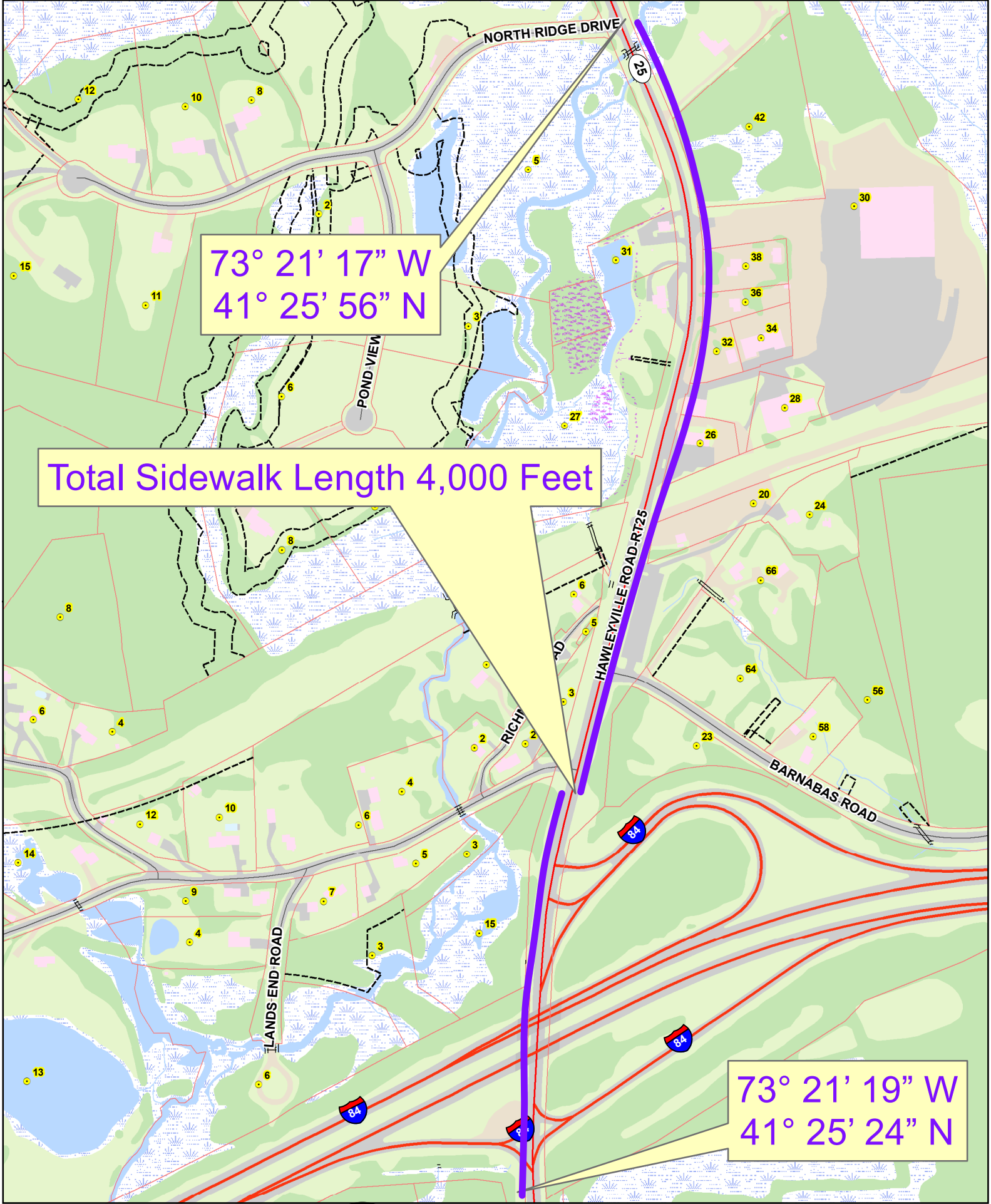
Respectfully Submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk



Rob Sibley
December 2011



Town of Newtown Sidewalk Plan

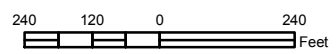


73° 21' 17" W
41° 25' 56" N

Total Sidewalk Length 4,000 Feet

73° 21' 19" W
41° 25' 24" N

Rob Sibley January 12, 2015



Proposed Hawleyville Streetscape Project
Newtown, CT