

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2015
7:05 pm.

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Karen Faust
Commissioner Michael Fox
Commissioner Charlene Garcia
Commissioner David Marsden (absent)
Commissioner Greg Polk
Commissioner Pamela Raynock
Commissioner Fernando Rosa
Commissioner Clifford Stamm (absent)
Commissioner Ken St. Onge
Commissioner Linda Woods (absent)

PRESENT: Economic Development Director
Andrew Brecher

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- NOVEMBER 5, 2014

Commissioner Fox made a motion to accept the November 5, 2014 minutes and Commissioner Raynock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers for 2015

Commissioner St. Onge nominated Commissioner Rosa to be Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia. There were no other nominations. Chairman Rosa was unanimously elected Chairman.

Commissioner Raynock nominated Commissioner Fox to be Vice-Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Faust. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Fox was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman.

Commissioner Fox nominated Commissioner St. Onge to be Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Raynock. Commissioner St. Onge was unanimously elected Secretary.

B. 2015 Commission Meeting Dates

Chairman Rosa reviewed the draft schedule of 2015 meeting dates. Commissioner Fox suggested eliminating the meeting dates in July and August. Chairman Rosa suggested eliminating the December meeting date in light of the Holiday Event to be held the same week. Commissioner Fox

made a motion to accept the revised schedule of meeting dates, seconded by Commissioner Raynock. The motion passed unanimously. The 2015 meeting dates are:

January 7, 2015
February 4, 2105
March 4, 2015
April 1, 2015
May 6, 2015
June 3, 2015
September 2, 2015
October 7, 2015
November 4, 2015
January 6, 2016

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Rosa led a discussion concluding the 2014 Holiday Event was well received, and commissioners agreed the venue worked out well and the food was very good. The commissioners also thanked Commissioner St. Onge for drafting the press release following the event. By general consent, the commissioners agreed to hold the event again this year--on Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 5:30-8:00 pm. Chairman Rosa volunteered to reserve the Portuguese Club for that date. Suggestions for improving the event in 2015 included:

- Reserving the date early with the Town Manager and other dignitaries.
- Considering a new name for the event.
- Upgraded certificates and plaques for award recipients.
- Additional recognition to long standing businesses and those celebrating milestone anniversaries.
- Accumulating more data on businesses receiving recognition, including employment and square footage of buildings.
- Potential recognition to a business/organization displaying exemplary corporate citizenship.
- Providing name tags for attendees.
- Adding signage to guide attendees to the appropriate entrance.
- Being more diligent in having attendees sign in and/or offer a prize for attendees dropping a business card in a "fishbowl".
- Starting the presentations on time and limiting speeches to the period between 6:15-6:45 pm.
- Having an EDC member greet each attendee at the entrance door.
- More active involvement of EDC members in inviting businesses within their districts.

Economic Development Director Brecher reported that the new Zoning Enforcement Officer, Michael D'Amato will keep track of new businesses in 2015 and provide that list to the EDC.

Chairman Rosa reported he will continue his monthly meetings in 2015 with Town Planner Craig Minor to better develop details for the event throughout the year.

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher reported on the 9 acre Hunter Development site at the corner of East Cedar Street and the Berlin Turnpike. Hunter has received a proposal from Amara Community Living to buy the entire site and construct a state-of-the-art Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) with

adult daycare, independent living, assisted living, memory care, sub-acute care and hospice services. This would replace the approved plan for a gas station, convenience store, hotel or assisted living facility, and a mix of medical offices, retail and/or day care center. The substitution cannot be made without Conservation Commission approval—and even though the impacts on the wetlands regulated areas would appear to be less than in the approved plan—that Commission could require a complete new application, including data, analyses and expert testimony, which would take 1-2 years. Hunter Development has stated they won't wait that long, so if simple modifications to the approved plan are not allowed by the Conservation Commission, Hunter will reject the Amara offer and continue with the approved plan. The Amara application is anticipated to be introduced to the Conservation Commission at its January 20, 2015 meeting.

Several commissioners indicated the EDC should support the Amara project before the Conservation Commission, emphasizing the value of having an impressive building at the Eastern gateway to Newington, that it would bring 300+ jobs to the community, provide needed services for Newington's growing elderly population and add upwards of \$1.5 million in added tax revenue annually. Director Brecher pledged to advise the EDC members of a hearing date to provide comment—if in fact, the Conservation Commission schedules a hearing.

In response to Commissioners' inquiries, Director Brecher also reported on the continued progress of the environmental remediation project at the National Welding site and that the Rooster Company restaurant was near opening in the former Black Rose location.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Holiday Event

See CHAIRMAN'S REPORT above.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

IX. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS

A. District Reports

Commissioner St. Onge suggested that if the Amara project moves forward, the Commission should consider its value in leveraging more healthcare facilities for Newington. Could that become Newington's "brand"? If not healthcare, what industry should Newington become known for?

Commissioner Raynock requested a future agenda item focusing on the parking situation at Market Square. She considers it "a mess", and despite previous initiatives many problems are still present.

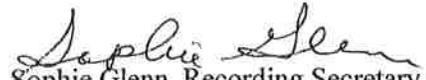
B. Chamber Report

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Raynock made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Fox seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:


Sophie Glenn, Recording Secretary