

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2015
7:00 pm.

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Richard Capuano
Commissioner Michael Fox (excused)
Commissioner David Marsden
Commissioner Pamela Raynock (excused)
Commissioner Fernando Rosa
Commissioner Clifford Stamm (excused)
Commissioner Ken St. Onge
Commissioner Linda Woods

PRESENT: Economic Development Director
Andrew Brecher

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- September 2, 2015

Commissioner St. Onge made a motion to accept the September 2, 2015 minutes. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

IV. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(Combined with Holiday Event)

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher reported on a number of developments around town. Ashley Furniture renovations to the former T-Bowl are continuing. Additional environmental sampling at the National Welding site is expected to begin within a week. Damato Chiropractic has announced it is moving to Best Market Plaza. Interior construction is scheduled to commence in November. Also at Best Market Plaza, there is serious interest from a group planning on opening a unique new restaurant.

Beacon Manufacturing has completed the purchase of its property on Cedar Street from TECT. The purchase price of \$2.59 million includes approximately 360,000 square feet of buildings on 37 acres. Elmwood Welding is reopening imminently. The new owners of the business bought the name and will be renting the building. They will be producing fuel tanks for back-up generator systems used at cell towers and other installations.

Firestone Auto Care held its grand opening celebration on October 23, 2015. On Fire Grill has opened at 2095 Berlin Turnpike, the former location of Tunxis Grille. Also, the Hidden Vine announced they are closing in November because their lease was not renewed.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Holiday Event

Chairman Rosa reminded everyone the event will be held on Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 5:30-8:00 pm at the Portuguese Club, 730 Mountain Road. The food has been ordered and the facility has a capacity of 120, with overflow room if necessary. There is no cost to attendees except for the cash bar. This is an opportunity for business people to meet the Town Manager and Department Heads and learn who to go to when they need help from the Town.

Chairman Rosa advised that Craig Minor, Town Planner and Mike D'Amato, Zoning Enforcement Officer, are compiling lists of new businesses in 2015 and businesses that have been operating in town for more than 25 years. Those businesses will be invited to the event to receive certificates of recognition.

Commissioner St. Onge is preparing another press release. Commissioner Capuano noted the flier/mailer prepared for the event was "well done".

Chairman Rosa suggested Data Mail might be a worthy candidate for Newington's "Business of the Year". Along with being one of Newington's largest employers and taxpayers, they were founded by a local family and have exemplified corporate citizenship in their underwriting of the Mill Park gazebos and sponsorship of summer concerts. Commissioner St. Onge made a motion to name Data Mail Business of the Year. Commissioner Marsden seconded the motion. A discussion ensued regarding the selection process. The motion passed 4-0 with Commissioner Capuano abstaining.

B. Town Center Parking, Snow Removal, Maintenance

A meeting to discuss these topics will be scheduled once Commissioner Fox returns to full health.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Gail Whitney, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, asked for greater coordination of the Holiday Event with the Chamber. In particular, she requested invitations be extended to the Chamber Board members. She also suggested a company to be considered for Business of the Year in future years. And she noted that donations to the Chamber's Food Drive can be made at the Chamber office on November 5, 2015.

Rose Lyons noted that Craig Minor had asked members of a Facebook group to identify long standing businesses in Newington and had received a number of responses. She also wondered why a Laz Parking bus was parked in Constitution Square one day.

Hal Whitney commented that Facebook is a great way to publicize what's going on in Town, including the groups Newington Free Speech, What's Happening in Newington and You Must Be From Newington. He thanked Director Brecher for his efforts the last three years and asked about the status of the Amara project, installation of a traffic signal at Alumni Road and Cedar Street and development of 550 Cedar Street (former Crest Pontiac site).

IX. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS

A. District Reports

None

B. Chamber Report

None

C. Other

Commissioner Rosa announced his term was ending on November 30, 2015. Due to expanded responsibilities in his position as President of HEDCO, he would not be seeking reappointment to the EDC and would therefore be stepping down as Chairman. He thanked the other commissioners for their efforts and support and wished the remaining and new commissioners much success in their tenure on the EDC.

Commissioner Marsden noted that Fenn Road Plaza is doing very well, with only one vacancy.

B. Chamber Report

Commissioner Stamm reported the Downtown Business Association is wrestling with how to sustain itself in the future.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner St. Onge made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Marsden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:


Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary