

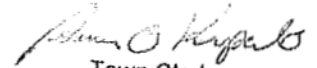
NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

December 3, 2025

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
IN NEWINGTON, CT

2025 DEC 12 AM 10:54


Town Clerk

Chairman Deana Reney called the regular meeting of the Newington Economic Development Commission to order at 7:02 p.m.

I. PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Avey
Commissioner Gillen
Commissioner Hamm-Govia
Chairman Reney
Commissioner Lapierre
Commissioner Galligan
Commissioner Lucas

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Paul Lenzi
Commissioner Rosa
Commissioner Sehmi

Staff Present

Erik Hinckley, Asst. Town Planner, ZEO

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS/SETTING OF MEETING DATES

Commissioner Gillian nominated present Chairman Reney to serve as Chairman with Commissioner Galligan seconding the nomination. The vote was unanimously in favor of the nomination with Chairman Reney accepting the nomination. Commissioner Lapierre was nominated as Vice-Chairman by Chairman Reney, seconded by Commissioner Hamm-Govia. Commissioner Lapierre accepted the nomination and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion. Commissioner Gillan was nominated as Secretary by Chairman Reney, seconded by Commissioner Lapierre. Commissioner Gillan accepted the nomination and the vote was unanimously in favor of his nomination.

The meeting dates for 2026 will be changing as discussed at the previous meeting. Starting in February of 2026 the regular meetings will be held on the second Thursday of the month, beginning at 6:00 p.m., February through next January. April 9, 2026 is a holiday, Passover, and the decision to move forward with that date can be discussed at the meeting of the 12th. The motion to accept the dates for 2026 was made by Commissioner Gillan, seconded by Commissioner Galligan and passed unanimously.

IV. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Commissioner Lapierre requested that the minutes be changed to reflect the dropping of the Rossini from her name and take the capital P out of the Lapierre to reflect the correct spelling on the public record. Commissioner Gillen corrected the spelling of his last name from Gillan to Gillen. Commissioner Gillen moved to accept the minutes as corrected seconded by Commissioner Galligan. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

VI. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT

Commissioner Lapierre reported that the Chamber will be holding a Bingo night on January 30th at the Portuguese Club, bring your own snacks, cash bar, \$30.00 per person, \$270 for a table of ten and that includes the card.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Welcome Letters

There have been 16 or 18 letters sent out. Eric did not have an opportunity to check with the Town Manager to see if there were positive responses to the letters. Additional letters can be sent out after the first of the year.

B. Passport

There were 31 passports brought into the Commission, two people did the whole card which resulted in seven entries; many participants did almost the whole card resulting in six entries each and many participants got four or five entries resulting in a total of 90 entries, many of them resulting in multiple entries.

There are 13 prizes resulting from marrying some of the gift cards so the prize pack is worth at least \$50.00 each. Prizes will be on a first come, first choice basis with all of the winners able to retrieve their prizes at Karma's Closet, 27 Garfield Street starting on December 4, 2025. There were 13 prizes awarded, drawn at random from the 90 entries. There was discussion on maintaining the information from the program to be used in the tracking to create the overall participation for the possible inclusion in the grant request. A concentrated effort next year can be made to include businesses that were not contacted this year and have indicated that they would participate if contacted. Distribution of the passport at local events was discussed, for example the craft fair at the library this year was successful and distribution there would probably have resulted in more participants. Overall the participation by the public was successful and the merchants were willing to participate for a second year.

It was suggested that for next year a flyer could be printed that the participants could put in the window of their business to make people aware of their participation and the customer would be aware of the ability to participate. There was discussion about getting the schools involved with this as a home work project.

Commissioner Lapierre offered to compile a list of the small businesses in town that supported this program and therefore they should receive consideration from the residents in the town and people should be supporting them.

Commissioner Avey commented that it was asking a lot of the parents to have their children participate, since we don't know about having the students doing this as a homework assignment, to drive them some place, and there is no knowledge of the economic issues involved, or there may be a feeling of obligation as a parent to purchase something so making it a homework assignment is a very poor idea. The Commission agreed that was a very considerate suggestion. Some passports could be distributed at a Chamber of Commerce function to make everyone aware of the program.

C. Hobby Odyssey

Commission Gilligan had contacted The Table Top Shop and was able to work with them and spoke with them about the Hobby Odyssey concept. They were very supportive of the idea and should really network more with them and give them the material and the presentation and it ideally makes more sense for them as an application. Further contact was holding off until the passport program was completed. The materials could be sent out via the e-mail provided by the general manager. It was a good connection to build and possibly they could be scheduled to attend the January meeting to gauge their interest and see if they would be open to conversations about the program.

D. Town Branding

Commissioner Gillan went into each piece and provided the next steps so that we can present this to Sonia and the Town Planner for our discussion on how to move this forward. This presentation involves the financial resources, the need to budget for brand development, the web site and the posting, and the marketing campaigns. That can be measured by how much scope the Commission wants to take on. There might be a logo, an idea of what the tag line might be and then a simple Facebook page. On the resource side, the Economic Development Committee staff, the Town Council members, any volunteer coordinators that may be needed and possibly the participation of local businesses, also contacting local libraries, Parks and Rec, etc., as well as potential brand agency or designer, web developer and contact creator, resources, any marketing channels, social media, newsletters. Looking to create a calendar and map essentially in an all in one platform that can be provided and it is being used in many regional sites. Market research is very important; is this something that the Town wants, needs, what are businesses looking for, developing brand identity. There are many opportunities to promote this, soft openings, a semi grand opening at a later date from the origin. Outcomes could be more traffic for local businesses, stronger civic pride, increase in public spaces, increase in awareness from visitors and Newington being perceived as a town that is desirable.

Going forward into the next step would be to tweak the overall program, attempt a presentation to the Town Planner, Town Council to get their reaction and their approval.

X. NEW BUSINESS

None

XI. TOWN PLAN UPDATE

Erik reported that the swim school on Southeast Road has been approved and will be located where Barnes and Noble is presently. The town line actually runs through the building, the front half being in Farmington and the rear being in Newington which is where the school will be located. The same situation is in Dick's, partly in Newington. The lease for Barnes and Noble is up in February so they will be there over the holiday. The front of the building will have a couple of other retail spots in Farmington. An addition was approved at 27 Garfield Street, a location that sounded familiar to the Commission, and there are a few pending applications. Prime Restaurant wants to add live entertainment to their liquor permit, so they will be moving forward with that. The convenience store at Robbins and Willard is going to convert to a liquor store and will be coming in with that application. There is a laundromat going to be re-opening in Twin City Plaza on the New Britain line so the owner is doing a little work there. There was a discussion about the vacant stores in the plaza on the Berlin Turnpike. Radio Shack has been empty for many many years, as has Modell's along with Party City. Nothing has been heard from the developers of the Keney building however since the Master Plan for Newington Center has been adopted by the Council, there may be some movement in the future. The adoption of the plan by the Council now goes back to the Planning and Zoning Commission to start looking at the regulation changes that may occur, some parking studies and finalize it and tweaking some and potential zone changes as needed.

XIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councilman Matt Plourd congratulated the Commission and the new officers on their work in the past and looking forward to working with them in the future. He complimented the Commission on all of the work that the Commission has done, the Passport program, the presentation of the Branding, so any time the Council can be contacted to assist they will do what they can. He suggested that one of the recommendations in the Master Plan has to do with some branding of the town center. It seems as if there is energy at the Commission level and drive that regarding the town center.

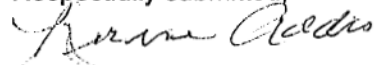
IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Hamm Govia thanked everyone on the Commission and indicated that if there was any need for her assistance, she would be available to help in any way possible. She is looking forward to supporting the town, mostly the center area, and she welcomed Commissioner Rioux who will be taking her spot on the Commission.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gillen moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Hamm-Govia. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis

Recording Secretary