

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Chairman Theresa Avey
Commissioner Maria Pane
Commissioner Dana Havens
Commissioner Clifford Stamm
Commissioner Fernando Rosa
Commissioner Sharon Dunning
Commissioner Robert Rioux
Commissioner Mark Siems
Commissioner Jerilyn Nagel (alternate)
Commissioner Jay Slater (alternate)

Town Council Liaison Gail Budrejko
Town Council Liaison Sharon Braverman

Economic Development Director Andrew Brecher

ABSENT:

Commissioner David Marsden

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Pane nominated Commissioner Avey to be Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Havens. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Avey was elected Chairman by unanimous vote. Chairman Avey was immediately seated to chair the balance of the meeting.

Commissioner Avey nominated Commissioner Pane to be Vice-Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Havens. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Pane was elected Vice-Chairman by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Pane nominated Commissioner Havens to be Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Avey. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Havens was elected Secretary by unanimous vote.

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NEWINGTON, CT
2019 DEC -9 AM 11:57
TOWN CLERK

V. SET MEETING DATES FOR 2020

A list of proposed meeting dates for 2020 was distributed, generally reflecting meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, with the exception of July, in which following past practice, no meeting is held. By consensus, Commissioners agreed to schedule an August meeting subject to change, and to hold the first meeting of 2020 on a Thursday.

Commissioner Pane made a nomination to accept the proposed meeting dates as revised, seconded by Commissioner Stamm. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting dates for 2020 are:

January 2, 2020
February 5, 2020
March 4, 2020
April 1, 2020
May 6, 2020
June 3, 2020
August 5, 2020 (subject to cancellation)
September 2, 2020
October 7, 2020
November 4, 2020
December 2, 2020
January 6, 2021

All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm in Town Hall Room L-101, except for January 2, 2020, which be held in Town Hall Room L-100 if L-101 is otherwise occupied. Completion of the new Town Hall will change the location for meetings later in the year.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Pane made a motion to accept the November 6, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Stamm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rose Lyons welcomed the new members.

VIII. Chamber of Commerce Report

Executive Director of the Chamber Pete Forcellina distributed an outline report and verbally reviewed recent Chamber successes and promotions and upcoming events. Highlights included 65 members added in the past year and an outstanding Silent Auction, Wine Tasting and Chocolate Challenge social event held on November 16, 2019.

Mr. Forcellina offered to share the full membership listing of the Chamber with EDC Commissioners at the next EDC meeting.

IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher reported on development items of interest around town:

- National Welding Site: There is new interest from an office building developer.
- 550 Cedar Street: Dakota submitted an application to CHFA for 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits.
- Local Market: At the request of several people, the owner has reached out again to Trader Joe's.
- 36 Holly Drive: Universal Supply signs are up and renovations are complete except for sprinkler system upgrades.
- 25 Holly Drive: The CSC building, where data center services are provided to UTC, is for sale.
- 65 Holmes Road: A portion of the former Sears Warehouse building has been leased to Amazon and a new lease was entered into for the Sears Outlet store.
- 324 Alumni Road: The exteriors and paving for two new flex buildings are complete.
- 353 Alumni Road: Corsicana Mattress is doubling production and hiring 35 new employees.
- 280 Hartford Avenue: Accurate Threaded Products sold its business and was relocated to Plainville in August, 2019. An auction of equipment was held on November 7, 2019 and the building is for sale.
- 124 Costello Road: The Ferguson Plumbing Supply site has been put up for sale by the owner of the property.
- 610 North Mountain Road: The property was sold to a Newington resident who will relocate his business there when the current temporary tenant's lease is up.
- 86 Day Street: The tall structures stored on that site are transmission tower sections that will be erected as part of Eversource's Greater Hartford Reliability Project.
- 50 Hollow Tree: A Purchase & Sale agreement is anticipated to be signed soon for the sale of that property to a Connecticut business relocating from Litchfield County.
- 2095 Berlin Turnpike: The Flying Monkey opened with an enthusiastic response from patrons.
- 2434 Berlin Turnpike: In addition to Geico moving into the space formerly occupied by the Verizon store, a Taqueria restaurant will be moving into the former Subway space and Buckingham Community Services is expanding.

Director Brecher also noted:

- Town Planner Craig Minor prepared an application for a three-year moratorium on low-income housing. A hearing will likely be held by the Town Council before that application is submitted.
- Newington's unemployment rate remained steady at 3.3% for October, 2019.
- Recent discussion of the necessity to increase the Grand List to offset Town budget increases could involve the EDC in planning a strategy.

Commissioners had a number of comments and questions about the status of Myra Cohen Way, marketing of industrial spaces and the Transit Village Design District area, a new location for the Reconstruction Center, utilization of social media, Newington's image and its sales pitch.

X. OLD BUSINESS

A. District Reports

Director Brecher will prepare a proposal for revised District assignments that reflect the new commission members and their home addresses.

B. Newington Means Business Brochure

Commissioner Rioux will be meeting with the designer to review final details. Commissioners agreed a new slogan would be beneficial and suggested a few alternatives.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cathy Dionne described her Project Graduation fundraising activities and the need for school programs to be progressive.

Rose Lyons had questions about Villas at Cedar, National Welding and Keeney Manufacturing.

Peter Forcellina suggested all EDC members should be “selling” the town and that the EDC should work with the Town Council, Town Plan & Zoning Commission and Conservation Commission to craft a marketing strategy, value proposition and branding that all can support.

XIII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Rosa announced that the Portuguese Club will be rebuilding in 2020.

Commissioner Siems proposed that every citizen of Newington needs to be a salesman for the Town.

Commissioner Dunning thanked Mr. Forcellina for his and the Chamber’s efforts and expressed her pleasure at hearing new ideas presented at the meeting.

Commissioner Havens expressed her excitement at getting a FaceBook page going for the EDC.

Commissioner Stamm spoke about the need to make small improvements throughout the Town, like new walking areas, fixing sidewalks and retaining walls and sprucing up neighborhood parks.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rosa made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Rioux seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:


Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary