

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

January 7, 2026

Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Reny called the regular meeting of the Newington Economic Development Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Gillan
Commissioner Lapierre
Commissioner Lenzi
Commissioner Lucas
Chairman Reney
Commissioner Rioux
Commissioner Wiltshire
Commissioner Galligan-A
Commissioner Forcellini-A

Commissioners Absent

Commissioner Manke
Commissioner Rosa
Commissioner Sehmi

Staff Present

Erik Hinckley, Asst. Town Planner, ZEO

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Lucas moved to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2025 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lapierre. The motion was approved unanimously with seven voting YEA.

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Town Clerk

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

VI. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT

Commissioner Lapierre reported that the main focus of the Chamber presently is the Bingo scheduled for January 30, 2026 at the Portuguese Club.

The past year has seen growth for the Chamber with membership approximately in the ± 200's.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Welcome Letter
- B. Passport program
- C. Hobby Odyssey
- D. Town Branding

Chairman Reny reviewed the items under Old Business for the new members to bring them up to date on the Commission's activities throughout the past year.

Welcome Letter: Letters have gone out to sixteen businesses acknowledging their commitment to the town over the years, for example, Morensen's, just completed 112 years in town. Erik is looking to send additional letters, approximately 16 by the end of January before starting on the new businesses, thanking them for locating in town. Members are asked to be responsible for acknowledging businesses by personalizing the letters. A list can be sent out itemizing the businesses that haven't been recognized yet.

Passport Program: Can be removed from the agenda since the program was completed in 2025 and was the second year of the program. The tracking of the participating businesses was done this past year and will be available for the program in 2026. It was suggested that the businesses who participated should receive a survey type letter asking if they are willing to participate again in 2026 and will relieve the necessity of contacting each business again if the participants agree to take part. The program is scheduled around Small Business Saturday and this past year scheduled for three weeks before the end of the program and the announcement of the winners of the donated prizes. In 2026 additional flyers for each business should be given to the participants to encourage more participation from the public, make them more aware of the program.

Hobby Odyssey: This grew out of Covid where people were more isolated and the Hobby Odyssey was, for example, for the month of February the hobby is yoga. So any where in the town where yoga was happening should be promoted, and then if you like wine, are the restaurants going to do something to bring the wine lovers together, so utilizing the businesses in the community together.

Town Branding: The difficulty of this item is that the town website might interfere with the program of branding. The EDC cannot have a social media presence since there is no

administrator to vet items posted on the website. Commissioner Gillan has tried to establish a visitor type page, looking to have a tourism focus Newington page. Looking to promote the businesses in town, promoting the benefit of living in Newington. There has been a logic model based on input from various entities, going through what is required, the budget necessary, and the long term and short term goals. Once there is an idea, a presentation to the Town Council can be made and see if they buy into the program and allocate time for a grant proposal if that type of funding is available. This type of project should have an Economic Development director, either full or part time to coordinate all of the information required.

The Town Manager has attended some of the EDC meetings, and is aware of some of the projects in addition to meeting with Erik, and is very responsive and helpful.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None

IX. TOWN PLANNING UPDATE

Erik updated the Commission on recent business changes in the town; Price Shopper rebranding to Market 32 and opening at a new location in approximately June, closing the present store; the convenience store at Robbins and Willard will be changing to a liquor store; Prime Burger requesting a change in the liquor license to accommodate live entertainment; Progressive Insurance becoming Attention to Detail and remodeling the canopy at the present location

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

XI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Rioux complimented the members of the Commission on their enthusiasm for the upcoming projects and the work that they have already done to increase public awareness of the businesses in town and the participation of both residents and businesses.

Commissioner Wiltshire suggested the Commission may want to look into an activity with the businesses in the center, possibly tying in with the concerts at Mill Pond Park during the spring and summer months. All of the activities previously held received a good turnout of participants and some type of spring/summer "stroll" should increase the foot traffic in the center.

XII. ADJOURN

Commissioner Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Newington EDC Commission

January 7, 2026

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Respectfully submitted,

Norine Addis

Norine Addis,

Recording Secretary