

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

May 5, 2021

Regular Meeting

Chairman Theres Avey called the regular Zoom meeting of the Newington Economic Development Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

III. **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present

- Commissioner Jennifer Ancona
- Chairman Theresa Avey
- Commissioner Dana Havens
- Commissioner David Marsden
- Commissioner Jerilyn Nagel
- Commissioner Maria Pane
- Commissioner Robert Riooux
- Commissioner Jay Slater

Commissioners Absent

- Commissioner Fernando Rosa
- Commissioner Skip Stamm

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Slater moved to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nagel. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion with eight voting YEA.

V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

VI. **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT**

There are a few tickets left for the drive-in movie which is Saturday, which is "Sing" The Chamber does awards every year and this year the board members are voting and Bill DeMaio nominated Megan Manke for the public service award. She has done a wonderful job during the pandemic, helping the registrars office during the primaries and the presidential election.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
TOWN OF NEWINGTON CT
2021 MAY 10 PM 3:26
Theresa Avey
TOWN CLERK

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Beautification Committee

1. The "Entrances" into Town
2. Some Plantings next to the signs that are around town dedication to residents that have passed away.

Some of the ideas in response to the e-mail were the entrance ways into town, plantings around the memorial signs and a discussion of using the districts for the project.

Gail Budrejko commented on the flowering trees on the green at Main Street and Robbins Avenue and what a welcoming effect they had just by their appearance as you enter into Newington.

Bill DeMaio commented that flowering trees add a nice touch to any community and when new trees are planted, flowering trees are the choice for new plantings. Over 5,000 daffodil bulbs were planted by the 150th Anniversary Committee and the Parks Department, mostly in town areas, such as the library, town hall, center green, senior center and entrances and exit to the town. It was suggested that the islands in town could be planted with flowers, appropriate to the season.

Commissioner Nagel has the 125th anniversary brochure and all of the things that were done for that celebration and some of them might apply to the beautification project. She will scan and send it to the members.

Any blight that is noticed by the Commissioners in their assigned districts should be reported to the building department in an effort to keep the liter under control in town, improving the appearance of the town in general.

Bill DeMaio presented to the committee; purchase four keystone cop costumes and have staff walk through the downtown as a good will ambassador during special events/occasions which would make Newington a little different than all of the other communities. Install two giant hanging flower pots on the poles at the corner of Garfield Street and Willard Avenue which will eventually be used for a Christmas banner, a Happy Holiday banner but flowers now, in general will help recognize the community. Encourage local businesses to purchase self-wicking flower pots for the front of the business for half price, including businesses on the Berlin Turnpike, the Briarwood Section, all the different areas. The self-wicking pots which last for a couple of days or a week will keep the flowers alive. The Council can be asked to fund X amount of dollars for the pots and it might get everyone on board for beautification in the business committee.

Economic Development could design a fall flag for the 170 poles that are downtown; there now are Welcome to Newington, American Flags, and Christmas decorations. Fall is the only season that needs a flag with some type of fall message.

Commissioner Slater suggested that “wind spinners” could be used in place of flowers since the life span would be greater and would require less maintenance, but they would need their own pole since they would have to be cemented into place. The problem could be that they could be destroyed by traffic, but if there were plantings, and if they were destroyed, you could simply replant.

Questions were raised about the size of the pots, comparing them to those outside of T.J.’s and they measure about 30 inches in diameter and about 30 inches tall. With water in the base, dirt, and then the plantings they are heavy and they are expensive, they are about \$300.00 for a commercial type fiberglass. The colors of the flowers could be standardized for continuity.

The cost of the flags are \$40.00 per flag and the \$25.00 for the pole, which are special because they spin in the wind and the flag isn’t likely to wrap around the pole. The clamps used to hold the poles are \$15.00 but are reusable. The present flags are put up between 5:00 and 7:00 a.m and takes a crew of two in a bucket truck for more than over a week.

There must be some kind of a theme, tying all of the decorations together and having continuity from one end of the town to the other.

Erecting a pavilion of over 60 feet at Constitution Square could be a project in the far future, putting in lights, pavers, a long range plan.

The downtown business flags and holiday decoration can be extended to Main/Stoddard and New Britain/Maple Hill Avenue. There is some economic development money from the state that the town will be developing some improvements. It makes sense as a starting place for the decorations?

Installation of two large American flags comprised of live flowers, red, white and blue, now as part of a berm at the library/town hall island so half faces Mazzoccoli Way and the other faces Cedar Street.

Tie Garfield Street into the downtown, connecting the government center with the downtown Market Square/Main Street area. Install \$400.00 wreaths, battery operated, since many of the poles on Garfield Street do not have electricity. There may be businesses that might want to purchase one for their locations, standardizing and tying everything together.

Start thinking about bringing people to Newington, attracting them, make them feel good, either by driving through, by visiting, by being enticed to come to an event, so if there is a soccer tournament on Fathers Day with 110 teams from all over New England, and they had a pleasant experience, it puts Newington in the front of their forehead.

Consider co-sponsoring the Night of Lights in the center of town. The Chamber of Commerce was originally active in that, but since budget cuts, they are helpful, and the program is bigger

than it has even been, closing Main Street, bringing thousands of people downtown, and this will attract people from all over, the same as the special events.

Commissioner Ancona suggested that the slogan for the fall flags should be "Fall in Love with Newington" with fall colors on the flag, yellows, oranges, and brown. It takes about eight weeks to print the flags and requires two to three weeks to put them in place.

A comprehensive plan should be put in place and presented to the Town Council for approval, with the Fall in Love with Newington as a concept and then two or three or four items, specific themes that we want to do, the flags, the signage, whatever else.

The Fall in Love with Newington can be used on the signs on Main Street along with fall illustrations, scarecrows, pumpkins, a cornucopia, and reservations can be made in the office for use of the sign for a week at a time.

For special events, the car show is scheduled, The St. Patrick's Day party in the park, food truck Friday, motorcycle madness are all scheduled, providing things don't go backward.

Commissioner Havens suggested that EDC purchase some of the pots, and put them in key spots and use them as an advertising tool. They can serve as an example of what the town is trying to do as a beautification project, and offers businesses to become part of the program.

A sample of the planter could be exhibited at the Extravaganza so people would be aware of what they look like, and what businesses could have if they wish. Hopefully the art work for the new flags would be available then also.

Plantings could be done at all of the Welcome to Newington signs, a flower box type of construction going the length of the sign. Flowers will be put in those areas by the Recreation Department and within a week should be attractive.

The electronic sign in front of Newington High School could be utilized to promote the Fall in Love with Newington, or some of the events that may be scheduled, when school is not in session.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Keith Chapman reported that there is a new manufacturing company coming to Rockwell Road, coming from another town nearby. Dick's is moving up near the mall, but staying in Newington so they will be moving out of the Berlin Turnpike. A couple of other businesses are relocating but staying within the town. There is optimism that there will be some announcements shortly of approved projects that will move forward in the town.

Burling Coat Factory is opening on the 14th, and Wren is looking to open some time in June.

IX. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (Speakers limited to two minutes.)

None

X. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Nagel questioned if this Commission could do anything to assist the local businesses in town with hiring. Many of the businesses cannot find qualified employees and are suffering because of it.

Commissioner Slater requested that the Executive Director of the Chamber be put on the distribution list so she would be eligible to attend the meetings. Chairman Avey indicated that Leslie Civitallo who is the new Executive Director is on the invite list.

Keith Chapman said that the Town is working with the Chamber of Commerce and a local solar company will be announcing a promotion to have the commercial properties throughout the town consider putting solar on their property. It would clean up the environment and also probably save quite a bit of money for the owners/occupants of the buildings, and that will be announced at the Council meeting next Tuesday. It's a collaborative venture with the Chamber of Commerce moving forward and hopefully this will help quite a few businesses in town. It's open to anyone in town, not just Chamber members.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Slater moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commission Rioux. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Norine Addis,
Recording Secretary