NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 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 David Marsden
Commissioner Fernando Rosa
Commissioner Robert Rioux
Commissioner Sharon Dunning

Town Council Liaison Gail Budrejko

Economic Development Director Andrew Brecher

ABSENT:

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Havens made a motion to accept the June 5, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Marsden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councilor Budrejko commented on the impending closing of Local Market and suggested committing resources to marketing the entire Local Market Plaza.

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Brecher noted that bills passed by the Connecticut General Assembly this year included granting a conservation easement to Newington for approximately 18.2 acres on Cedar Mountain.

He also advised that Dakota Partners had won its lawsuit against Newington’s Plan and Zoning Commission, with the judge directing TPZ to approve Dakota’s applications.
Director Brecher summarized a number of development items that occurred over the summer of 2019:

--Local Market announced it would close by the end of September, 2019.
--3333 Berlin Turnpike: Eversource reports it is evaluating the next steps it will take to sell the property.
--Villas at Cedar Mountain: The developers have decided to pursue HUD financing. It will be a challenge to begin construction in the Spring of 2020.
--National Welding: Other hotel developers/owners/operators are being solicited. A meeting with new DOT Commissioner Joe Giulietti elicited no direction regarding a parking structure or turnover to the Town of Myra Cohen Way.
--81-85 Alumni Road: Trumpf of Farmington leased 141,000 square feet for warehousing.
--36 Holly Drive: All 65,000 square feet were leased to Universal Builders Supply.
--Indian Hill Country Club: Café Louise moved out and is being replaced by Casa Mia.
--Victory Gardens: Briefings were held to review the concept for adding a Phase II to the project.
--50 Budney Road: The 11,950 square foot building has been listed for sale.
--75 Kitts Lane: After two years of unsuccessfully marketing the property for sale, a new broker is likely to reposition this former location of the Connecticut School of Massage.
--56 Costello Road: Pad sites are being marketed in front of the Ashley Home Store.
--105 Pane Road: Turf Master Landscapes took over summer operations of Pane Road Materials.
--170 Pane Road: Construction has restarted on the addition to the Reno Machine/Reno Properties building.
--188 Costello Road: The prefab building is almost complete for the new home of DiCioccio Brothers Landscaping.
--79 East Cedar Street: Santander Bank is closing in September, 2019.
--324 Alumni Road: Steel is being erected for two new flex buildings.
--262 Brockett Street: South End Café and Pastry Shop opened in the former Vida Doce space.
--2095 Berlin Turnpike: Saz Jamaican restaurant closed. A new tenant is expected to be announced imminently.
--2190 Berlin Turnpike: Tony Boloney’s Deli opened.
--2272 Berlin Turnpike: Try-Zen medical marijuana dispensary renovations are almost complete. The business will operate under the name “Fine Fettle Dispensary”.
--2391 Berlin Turnpike: Artichoke Basile pizza restaurant opened.
--2434 Berlin Turnpike: Verizon store closed. Announcement of a new tenant for that space is expected soon.
--2590 Berlin Turnpike: Rae’s Florist is open only limited hours. That location is being used mainly for staging deliveries.
--3153 Berlin Turnpike: Neptune Cremation Service opened.
--3443 Berlin Turnpike: O’Reilly Auto Parts opened.

Director Brecher also reviewed his update to the Town Council at its August 27, 2019 meeting, including the table of “Great Schools Ratings” he presented comparing Newington to surrounding towns.

Newington’s unemployment rate for July, 2019 was 3.2%, the same as December, 2018.

Director Brecher listed the top ten taxpayers in Newington, all of them retail shopping plazas except Eversource.

Director Brecher announced that Transit Village Design District regulations were adopted by TPZ on August 14, 2019. Shortly thereafter, DOT added Newington Station to its capital program for construction in 2022-2023, although funding is not yet available.
VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. District Reports

Chairman Avey noted a new landscaper is moving in on North Mountain Road.

B. Newington Means Business Brochure

Commissioner Rioux distributed a first pass of the “Newington Means Business” brochure and invited commissioners to submit comments to him by email.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

IX. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT

Chairman Avey presented the Chamber report, which included recent events, upcoming seminars and membership and media initiatives.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

XI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Rioux asked about the status of Hartford Healthcare land in the Town Center and possibilities for master planning Town Center expansion.

Commissioner Rosa announced HEDCO is administering a new State loan program created for Women Owned Businesses, offering up to $100,000 at 4 percent interest for ten years.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marsden made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Pane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary