

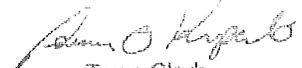
NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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IN NEWINGTON, CT

2020 NOV 20 PM 2: 35

Special Meeting

November 18, 2020

  
Town Clerk

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Teresa Avery called the special Zoom meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

III. **ROLL CALL**

Present

Chairman Teresa Avery  
Commissioner Dana Havens  
Commissioner David Marsden  
Commissioner Jerilyn Nagel  
Commissioner Maria Pane  
Commissioner Fernando Rosa  
Commissioner Jay Slater  
Commissioner Jennifer Ancona  
Commissioner Clifford Stamm (6:50)

Absent

Commissioner Sharon Dunning  
Commissioner Rober Rioux-excused  
Commissioner Linda Woods

James Krupinski: For the record, new Town Planner Renata Bertotti is on and listening.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Marsden moved to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Havens. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion and the minutes were accepted.

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

None

## **VI. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT**

Peter Forcellina reported that the Chamber is doing very well, maintaining the visibility through networking meetings, women's networking meetings monthly and have done a couple of ribbon cuttings in the last month. The membership retention for the Chamber is over eighty percent so even with the pandemic the membership is still being retained. The members were allowed to support multiple payments during the year which has helped retain members.

New businesses have signed up during September and October. The new Subway that recently moved from Dicks Sporting Goods to the Joanne Plaza, Newington Pizza and Fred Astaire Studio, Tony DeLuco also on Market Square, Northeast Financial, a mortgage broker that supports the Newington area, and Nick Wood, a realtor, and Giovanni's bakery.

The chamber sponsored a drive-in movie at the end of September, a socially distant opportunity. Families came out, there were fifty cars, sold out and with the sponsorships and the sell out it was a successful event for the Chamber. Two recent ribbon cuttings, DiBella's and Subway were also held. Many of the Chamber members supported the Walk for Alzheimer's Association in early October.

The silent auction, wine tasting and chocolate challenge scheduled for this month was cancelled because of the restrictions and we were trying to look at other opportunities that we might have.

The chamber is still conducting business and doing well. Deanna Reny has become the Chamber president and Kathy Braga is the outgoing, the immediate past president.

There will be some new businesses coming with the re-leasing of Artichoke Basile.

Chairman Avery questioned that with the new community center if there was any thought given to using the community center gym for events. They have a couple of multi-purpose rooms, a small kitchen area. The event had been previously held at the G. Fox building in Hartford, and this would be keeping it in town in the coming years.

Peter Forcellina had hoped that a tour of the new town hall would be given but with the pandemic that was not possible. All opportunities are open for the new years. There is a question about the town facility allowing an alcohol permit.

Chairman Avery reported that for the Extravaganza there was a beer tasting and that was held in the old gym.

A Newington location would be considered and it was not held in town previously because there was no facility to support an attendance of 300 people. There is no indication because of the virus of when events would be held, late spring, summer or early fall.

Chairman Avery brought up doing an auction with the help of NCTV and Peter Forcellina said that plan had been put on the back burner. Looking at plans from the total venue perspective, the revenue stream coming in is better than anticipated so different types of fund raisers are being looked at. At this time because of the work involved in such an activity it is not being looked at as being active at this time.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Avery introduced the new Town Planner, Renata Bertotti who just started in the position in the beginning of November. Renata gave a brief summary of her background, working in land use positions for probably over fifteen years doing some enforcement work, and then became an Assistant Planner to the Director of Development and Enforcement in Meriden and now the Town Planner in Newington which is also her home town. She worked in Meriden toward some Economic Development action and on the planning of things that could be done working toward Economic Development. Keith Chapman will continue to be the liaison for this Commission and Renata will work as directed by him. The Commission extended best wishes and good luck.

Commissioner Rosa advised of a new program throughout the state called the Connecticut TUCD Grant Program. It is \$5,000 for small businesses throughout the state and the value of the fund is fifty million dollars and the program is looking to fund ten thousand businesses. The application must be filed on line and under the CT.Gov is information about this grant. Peter Forcellina said that the Chamber had been promoting this under the title of Connecticut Cares.

Chairman Avery questioned the type of restaurant replacing Artichoke Pizza. It will be a restaurant with no definite opening date. Peter said that work is being done inside. The business will be primarily seafood, fried seafood, boiled seafood, broiled seafood.

Chairman Avery reported that Wren Kitchens is coming into the old Ann and Hope building with work going forward. It is an upscale kitchen design center, just focusing on kitchens. There is one open in Milford, the first one in the country. The business is from England. S.K Lavery is also open, and there were developers looking a couple of months ago at five different parcels of land and they are still interested.

Commissioner Nagel added information about the business grant from the State of Connecticut. The deadline to apply is December 10 and it can be a non-profit or a for profit, as long as you verify how much money you lost during Covid. It's called the Connecticut Cares Small Business Grant, application on line.

Gail Budrejko questioned if Peter knew of any of the Chamber members who had actually gone out of business do to the Covid situation. Peter knew of some, not chamber members, but there are some businesses that have left Newington and shut down such as Pier One, Modells, LaserQuest, all three of those have closed. Gail knew that some of them are struggling but they are still in business because the actual impact of Covid didn't happen until March but they are very concerned about making it through the holiday season when you would probably see some more businesses close. She was looking for a way to promote some of the businesses.

Peter indicated that recently the Chamber restarted the Take-out Thursday to support the businesses. Two weeks ago they had South End Café, then had Salsa 4, tomorrow will be Goldburgers. Chanel 3 was looking for small business that were being impacted by the pandemic, looking for smaller mom and pop type shops and Peter gave them a list of 12 or 13 smaller businesses in town to be promoted.

Commissioner Rosa indicated that there is a loan program available to women and minority owned businesses through the state. The loan can be up to one hundred thousand dollars for specifically any expense, from payroll to renovations for expansion. This is for a period of ten years, so if you have anyone that might need this, might not be able to get financing through regular channels, this program exists.

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

None

X. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Nagel questioned if the Take Out Thursday was on Facebook and Peter reassured the Commission that it was on the Newington Chamber page and that is picked up by several of the Newington Facebook groups. Peter agreed that it will be very difficult for the restaurants over the next few months with only fifty percent seating. Commissioner Havens spoke to a restaurant owner who was going to keep the tents up and get heaters and try to increase the seating that way, it was too expensive, he would not have broken even.

Commissioner Slater questioned the status of the brochure and Chairman Avery took responsibility for not continuing with following up but will follow up now.

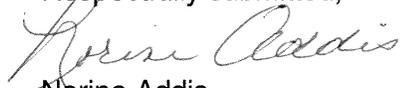
Commissioner Stamm asked if there was a town policy about the leaves that people are putting in the street. He thought that they should be piled on the lawn and questioned who to talk to about that. He was told to call the Highway Department, Tom.

The next meeting of the Commission will be the regular meeting, Wednesday, December 2nd at 7:00 p.m.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Slater moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from Commissioner Marsden. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Norine Addis,  
Recording Secretary