

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015
7:00 pm.

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Karen Faust (absent)
Commissioner Michael Fox
Commissioner Charlene Garcia (absent)
Commissioner David Marsden
Commissioner Greg Polk
Commissioner Pamela Raynock
Commissioner Fernando Rosa
Commissioner Clifford Stamm (absent)
Commissioner Ken St. Onge
Commissioner Linda Woods (absent)

PRESENT: Economic Development Director
Andrew Brecher

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- JANUARY 7, 2015

Commissioner Fox made a motion to accept the January 7, 2015 minutes and Commissioner Polk seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

IV. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Rosa thanked Commissioner St. Onge for his efforts in placing recent excellent articles in Newington Life and the Hartford Courant.

Chairman Rosa also commented on the proposed Amara project at the Hunter Development site at the corner of East Cedar Street and the Berlin Turnpike. He noted the Conservation Commission has scheduled a hearing regarding modifications to the existing permit on Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

In addition, Chairman Rosa reported on the State of Connecticut budget crisis and the likelihood of significant spending cuts, including potentially at the Department of Economic and Community Development. However, there could also be additional funds allocated for urban and community development.

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher reported on a number of development activities around town. Carson Richard Kitchen and Bath has opened on the Berlin Turnpike near the Olympia Diner. AutoZone has purchased the building at 3298-3300 Berlin Turnpike for \$1 million and has begun renovations. Northeast

Utilities/Eversource has announced it will be vacating its building at 3333 Berlin Turnpike and relocating those employees across the street to its Berlin campus during 2015. That would potentially open up a 24 acre site for redevelopment. Table Top Shop has opened in Twin City Plaza on New Britain Avenue. The Rooster Company restaurant has opened on Main Street at the location of the former Black Rose Tavern.

Director Brecher also briefed the Commission on the status of the National Welding project, noting that weather has had an effect on the remaining activities, which include removal and disposal of excavated soils and sampling/characterizing of the remainder of the building slab. The project is within budget and funds could be available to begin the next phase that would focus on capping the site.

Director Brecher noted that he will begin a new occasional series of informational meetings for seniors at the Senior and Disabled Center focusing on economic development topics of interest. The first will be on Friday, February 13, 2015 at 10:00 am with the topic being the Amara project.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Holiday Event

There was no further discussion of the Holiday Event that will be held on Thursday, December 3, 2015.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioners Fox and Raynock raised their concerns regarding plowing at Market Square and the Municipal Parking Lot. They were particularly concerned with unsafe conditions following periods of significant snowfall. Several suggestions were made, including road/sidewalk redesign and modifying/enforcing parking limits. Director Brecher will organize a meeting with the Highway Department, Police Department, Engineering Department, Downtown Merchants Association and members of the Commission to discuss the matter further.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Gail Whitney, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce agreed there were issues with Town Center parking and urged citizens to contact the Police Department with specific complaints about violators. She commented on rumors regarding the relocation of Vito's Pizza and requested clarification on the process for Amara gaining approvals to develop its project. In addition, she voiced her opposition to low income housing near the Cedar Street Fastrak station, but endorsed university related uses. And she would like to see a Carrabba's restaurant recruited to the Berlin Turnpike.

Rose Lyons endorsed a meeting between Town Departments to address the issues with parking and maintenance of parking spaces in the Town Center, and repeated her request to improve signage in the Municipal Parking Lot. Further, she endorsed the public receiving information on the Amara project (from sources other than Facebook) and urged Town commissions to work together to do what is best for Newington.

IX. REMARKS BY COMMISSIONERS

A. District Reports

Commissioner Fox noted the passing of Myra Cohen, who served 12 terms on the Town Council and was renowned for her dedicated service to the Town of Newington.

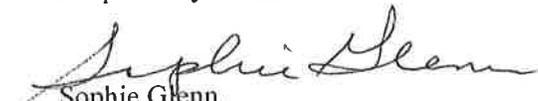
B. Chamber Report

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Fox made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Raynock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:


Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary