

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioner Richard Capuano
Commissioner Maria Pane
Commissioner Ken St. Onge
Commissioner Dan Fisher
Commissioner Dana Havens
Commissioner Sarah Jorgensen
Commissioner Michael Fox
Commissioner Jennifer Spano (seated for Commissioner Stamm)

Town Council Liaison Gail Budrejko
Town Council Liaison Carol Anest

Economic Development Director Andrew Brecher

ABSENT:

Commissioner Clifford Stamm
Commissioner Linda Woods (excused)

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Havens made a motion to accept the January 6, 2016 minutes. Commissioner Pane seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0, with Commissioners Jorgensen and Fox abstaining.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Capuano deferred his remarks to the discussion under the agenda item "New Business".

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher reviewed the Constance Leigh Drive Streetscape project proposal that will be presented to the Town Council on February 23, 2016.

Director Brecher updated the status of the National Welding site project, noting that 24 tons of low level PCB contaminated soil and concrete will soon be removed from the site for disposal. Also, an

application for a Wetlands Map Amendment has been submitted to the Conservation Commission to update the Town's Wetlands Map to reflect actual wetlands in the vicinity of 690 Cedar Street.

Director Brecher advised that a Site Plan application for a Starbucks at the intersection of Fenn Road and Myra Cohen Way will be considered by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission. The TPZ is also continuing its discussions of a Transit Oriented Development Overlay Zone around the Cedar Street CTfastrak station.

Director Brecher reported that Picasso's Restaurant has replaced Pizzeria Matteo's on the Berlin Turnpike. Grand Openings were recently held for the On-Fire Grill, Dental Center and Ashley HomeStore, all on the Berlin Turnpike. Also, the Grand Opening for Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine Center on Market Square will be held on February 23, 2016.

Director Brecher reviewed his discussion with the Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services regarding the Hartford Regional Center and his research into the likelihood of a Container Store locating to the Berlin Turnpike.

Director Brecher alerted the Commission that Acting Town Manager Tanya Lane would be submitting her 2016-2017 budget to the Town Council on February 26, 2016 and that all Commission members are invited to the Chamber of Commerce annual "State of the Town" breakfast being held at Newington High School on February 25, 2016.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Hal Whitney requested that Commissioners' use microphones so their remarks can be heard better by the public in attendance.

Dave Marsden advised he has a client interested in opening a restaurant on the Berlin Turnpike.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Capuano suggested the Commission undertake a discussion of the "Meet Your Town Officials" holiday event held in December, 2015. He asked Director Brecher to prepare statistics and Commissioner St. Onge to prepare suggestions for improvement—to be presented for discussion at the next meeting.

Commissioners agreed it would be mutually advantageous for the EDC to be regularly represented at Chamber of Commerce board meetings, just as the Chamber's Executive Director regularly attends EDC meetings. Commissioner Fisher volunteered to attend the next Chamber board meeting on behalf of the Commission.

Chairman Capuano distributed a document with his thoughts to stimulate discussion regarding the Commission's mission and goals. Thereafter, Commissioners engaged in a spirited exchange of ideas encompassing a potential mission statement, objectives, goals and specific initiatives the Commission might choose to adopt or pursue. Director Brecher volunteered to summarize the discussion—as a starting point for continuing the discourse at the next meeting.

Commissioners agreed Director Brecher should distill the thoughts expressed into a draft mission statement for review by all Commissioners.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rose Lyons requested there be public participation at the beginning and end of each EDC meeting. She also asked that the agenda be made clearer.

Gail Whitney, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, advised the Chamber has a new website "newingtonnow.com". She noted that the library is a great resource for business information, including access to Reference USA. Ms. Whitney also asked the Commission to once again participate in the Chamber of Commerce annual Business Expo, once it has established its new strategy. In addition, she noted that the Chamber annually presents its "Best Of" awards—which could potentially be coordinated with an EDC activity.

Hal Whitney noted he was glad to hear the Commission's discussions taking place and would be willing to volunteer if such efforts would be valuable. He fully supports an EDC website and noted Wallingford's is excellent. Mr. Whitney also recommends greater coordination with the Chamber of Commerce.

Dominic Pane stated his agreement with having public participation at the beginning and end of each EDC meeting. He also suggested the Commission research some of the older videos promoting Newington which are probably archived at NCTV.

XI. COMMISSIONER AND LIAISON COMMENTS

Commissioner Pane asked that EDC members receive advance notification of Chamber of Commerce hosted ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

Councilor Budrejko urged the Commission to make sure it is prepared with quality content before it embarks on social networking.

Commissioner Fox thanked the Town Council liaisons for their participation, citing his recollection that this was the first meeting where liaisons had joined in Commission discussions.

Councilor Anest thanked the Commission for allowing the liaisons to be active participants—and that she sees good things happening with the Commission.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted:



Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary