

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioner Richard Capuano
Commissioner Ken St. Onge
Commissioner Dana Havens
Commissioner Clifford Stamm (Arrived at 7:10)
Commissioner Jennifer Spano
Commissioner Michael Fox

Town Council Liaison Gail Budrejko

Economic Development Director Andrew Brecher

ABSENT:

Commissioner Maria Pane (excused)
Commissioner Dan Fisher (excused)
Commissioner Linda Woods (excused)

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fox made a motion to accept the May 4, 2016 minutes. Commissioner St. Onge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

VI. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman Capuano asked members of the Commission to provide timely notice to the Chairman, Director Brecher or the Town Planner's office if they will be unable to attend a meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Districts

Commissioner Havens asked if there had been a decision made on business cards. Commissioners agreed to discuss the topic further at a future meeting.

Chairman Capuano asked Director Brecher to design a blank form that could be used to collect information for the business inventory/database. He urged commissioners to submit completed forms at the monthly EDC meetings.

B. Working Group Reports

Social Media: Commissioners St. Onge and Havens reported they are ready to meet with Information Technology Director Paul Boutot to discuss procedures and logistics for implementing a Facebook page. Director Brecher will organize a meeting with attendees in person, on the phone or through Facetime/Skype.

Business Events & Awards: Chairman Capuano advised he will be contacting the Chamber of Commerce to discuss combining efforts, most likely beginning in 2017. Commissioners suggested some issues to be addressed, including establishing criteria for awards, recognizing businesses for achievements between EDC events, differentiating the EDC from the Chamber and the types of events that could be cosponsored. In addition, Commissioner Spano volunteered to join the Business Events & Awards Working Group.

Chairman Capuano reported that he met with Newington High School administrators and discussed potential internships and partnerships between the high school and business community. He suggested having those administrators attend an EDC meeting in the Fall of 2016 to continue the dialog.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Capuano reminded commissioners that no meeting of the EDC is scheduled for July, 2016. Commissioner Fox made a motion to cancel the August, 3, 2016 meeting as well. Commissioner Stamm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the EDC will be September 7, 2016.

IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher announced that the EPA and DEEP advised they had no objection to spreading the material piles at the National Welding site. That work, along with some other minor grading, should occur within a few weeks. And although the DOT has yet to decide on the amount of parking they would like constructed at the site, they did call Director Brecher to report they are close to having a number.

Director Brecher reported that Damato Chiropractic is slated to open its new office in Best Market Plaza by the end of June, 2016. Sunset Cleaners, 2327 Berlin Turnpike has closed. A new automobile related use is looking to open at the former site of R&M Motors at 172 Kelsey Street. The owners of the former Acorn Thompson building at 3311 Berlin Turnpike are considering renovations to make the property more attractive for new tenants.

A new town hall building committee has been formed—with Director Brecher expressing his optimism that this committee will design a solution that citizens will support, including an improved community center. Director Brecher also advised there would be a public information meeting on Monday evening, June 6, 2016, sponsored by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission to review potential traffic safety improvements in the Alumni Road area.

The Connecticut Secretary of State unveiled a new online system for business formations, but that its functionality still requires improvements. IBM is hiring 20,000 employees for its “Cloud” business while simultaneously laying off 56,000 employees from its software and services businesses—an indication of how narrowly defined skill sets are becoming, even within the tech industry. The Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation increasing to \$47,476 the amount annual salaried employees can make to qualify for overtime pay. Although many “brick and mortar” retail businesses are closing stores, TJX, parent of TJ Maxx, Marshall’s and HomeGoods, announced they are adding 1,900 stores—and that there are rumors they are looking at potential Berlin Turnpike locations.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Dave Marsden commented that he likes coming to EDC meetings to hear what’s going on in town and thanked the Chairman for doing a great job. He invited commissioners to the Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner on June 3, 2016. Ticket price is \$40.00. He also would like to see the Alumni Road intersection squared away and a business emergency call list implemented for use by the Police Department and Fire Marshal.

XI. COMMISSIONERS’ REPORTS

Commissioner Stamm reiterated the challenges facing the Downtown Business Association, including building membership, finding times to hold meetings and undertaking new initiatives. Chairman Capuano asked Commissioner Stamm to provide an update at the next meeting.

XII. LIAISONS’ REMARKS

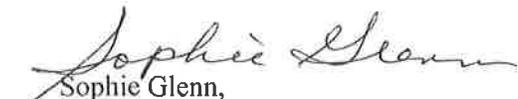
Councilor Budrejko reported that consultant meetings were held to gain input on the Town Manager position and that the Town Council is considering whether to pursue a national or regional search.

She also expressed her concern about the Downtown Business Association, especially since the Town Center is so important to the vitality of the community—and wondered if there were ways for the EDC to help the DBA?

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Fox made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner St. Onge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:


Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary