

NEWINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT
CONFERENCE ROOM L-101 LOWER LEVEL, TOWN HALL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioner Maria Pane
Commissioner Ken St. Onge
Commissioner Dan Fisher
Commissioner Jennifer Spano
Commissioner Michael Fox

Town Council Liaison Gail Budrejko
Town Council Liaison Carol Anest

Economic Development Director Andrew Brecher

ABSENT:

Commissioner Dana Havens (excused)
Commissioner Clifford Stamm (excused)

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of officers was necessary due to the resignation of former Chairman Richard Capuano.

Commissioner Spano nominated Commissioner Pane to be Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Fox. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Pane was elected unanimously.

Chairman Pane nominated Commissioner Spano to be Vice-Chairman, seconded by Commissioner St. Onge. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Spano was elected unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fox made a motion to accept the June 1, 2016 minutes. Commissioner St. Onge seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rose Lyons thanked the Chairman for moving the Economic Development Directors Report to earlier on the agenda.

Hal Whitney requested that all Commissioners speak into their microphones so the public can hear their remarks.

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Brecher provided a number of updates since the Commission last met in June, 2016.

With rough grading at the National Welding site complete, attention is now shifting to soliciting developer interest. Concepts for permanent and potentially temporary parking for CTfastrak users continues to be discussed with the State Department of Transportation.

Construction has begun on the new Starbucks at the intersection of Fenn Road and Myra Cohen Way.

Best Market Plaza has seen Empire Pizza close, an expansion of Damato Chiropractic into the former Office Café space and the opening of Garrett's Barber Shop. Potential new tenants could include a customized fitness center and a restaurant.

In addition to Garrett's, ownership has changed at Modern Barber Shop, The Lost Art barber shop opened on New Britain Avenue, and Zurell's barber shop opened on Stoddard Avenue.

The Little Cake Café has opened in the former Hidden Vine location on Constitution Square, plans have been developed for a new restaurant next to Goldburgers on Main Street, Ruby Tuesday on the Berlin Turnpike has closed and construction of the Wood-n-Tap on the Berlin Turnpike is progressing, with an anticipated opening date of October 22, 2016.

The owners of Beacon Manufacturing have placed for sale the front portion of their property at 549 Cedar Street for \$4.8 million, suggesting a retail use—which would require a zone change.

3191 Berlin Turnpike (the former Mobil station) was sold to a gas station operator who intends to reopen the gas station essentially as is, except for a new color scheme. The brand of gas has not yet been revealed. 2391 Berlin Turnpike (the former Sal D's Salon) was sold to the owner of the Sculptures Plaza, immediately adjacent on Brockett Street. Vida Doce bakery in the Sculptures Plaza is for sale for \$124,900. The new medical arts building at 2272 Berlin Turnpike will be ready for leasing in October, 2016.

Clinisanitas is opening next to Stop & Shop on Kitts Lane in a portion of the former Michael's space. Owned by a South American operator of medical facilities, Clinisanitas has a partnership with Connecticare to provide medical services to Connecticare enrollees, with a particular focus on Spanish speaking individuals. Hiring is now underway for the three Clinisanitas facilities being constructed simultaneously in Connecticut.

The Bradford Commons Apartments on Willard Avenue and the Woodbridge Apartments on Main Street were recently sold for a total of \$15 million. That equates to a per unit price of approximately \$109,000, somewhat higher than other apartment sales in the area.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Districts

District assignments need to be revised due to the recent loss of EDC members. By consensus, Commissioners agreed to revisit district assignments when membership increases.

B. Working Group Reports

Social Media: Commissioner St. Onge reported on a meeting held with Commissioner Havens, Town Manager Tanya Lane, IT Director Paul Boutot and Director Brecher. With the launch of the Town's Facebook page, it was suggested that EDC and Economic Development should use the Town page to post their information. Director Brecher distributed a list of forty potential topics for postings. By consensus, Commissioners endorsed proceeding with postings on the Town Facebook page.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss Rescheduling October Meeting

Commissioner Pane suggested moving the October meeting date to Wednesday, October 19, 2016 due to the inability of Director Brecher to attend the originally scheduled October 5, 2016 meeting. Commissioners agreed to make that change by acclamation.

B. October Business Event

Chairman Pane and Commissioner Spano reviewed the details for the business breakfast cosponsored by the EDC and Chamber of Commerce to be held at Stew Leonard's on Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at 7:30 am. Ticket price is \$10.00 with profits being donated to the Newington Food Bank. The Chamber will promote the event through its electronic communications and by newspaper articles. EDC members are encouraged to personally invite businesses within their districts. Director Brecher will provide color fliers and his business cards to be distributed to potential attendees. The event will also be publicized on the Town's Facebook page. Director Brecher will make a presentation at the event, accompanied by other Town officials who will be there to answer specific questions.

Commissioner Fox made a motion to proceed with the October 26, 2016 business event, seconded by Commissioner Spano. The motion passed unanimously.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Gail Whitney, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, expressed her pleasure in working with Chairman Pane and Commissioners Fox and Spano on the October business event. She also noted the Chamber's Wine Tasting, Chocolate Challenge and Auction Event would be held on September 10, 2016 at the former G. Fox building in Hartford—and invited all Commissioners to attend.

Hal Whitney liked the idea of the EDC "piggybacking" on the Town's new Facebook page, but also urged Commissioners to encourage speedy creation of the Town's new website, which should contain a robust focus on economic development.

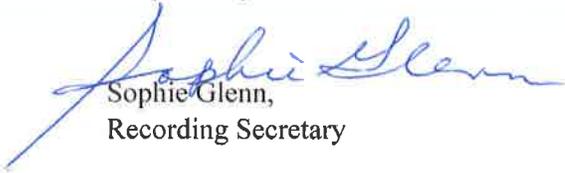
XI. COMMISSIONER AND LIAISON COMMENTS

Councilor Anest wondered about the contingency plan if the October business event was oversubscribed. Gail Whitney advised that Stew Leonard's had a larger meeting room if necessary.

XII. 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 7:44 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



Sophie Glenn,
Recording Secretary