

Litchfield Economic Development Commission

Wednesday, March 27, 2012

Economic Development Commission

Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

CALL TO ORDER

David Dean, EDC Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

PRESENT

Regular members, David Dean, Kay Carroll, Renee Betar, Cleve Fuessenich and Alexander Vandenberg were present. Alternate Doug Parker was present at 7:20 p.m. Regular member Judy Elliott and alternate members Mitchell Fishman and William Conti were absent. John McKenna (Republican-American) was present at 7:20 p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kay Carroll made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2012 meeting as read.

Renée Betar seconded the motion; **the motion passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

LITCHFIELD JAIL

Cleve Fuessenich met informally with Russ Bartin. It's too early to know in what direction this project is going.

GOALS FOR 2012

Tabled until next meeting.

MONTHLY UPDATES:

LITCHFIELD HILLS FOOD SYSTEMS

Market is in good shape for spring and summer. Other Litchfield Hills Food Systems' affiliated projects include return visit from Olympic marathoner, Rod Dixon, who is working regionally with school children who are participating in the Kids Marathon. To date 300 kids are enrolled with a projected increase to 500 by the time the program culminates with kids running the last mile in Litchfield during Road Race weekend.

NW CT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Doug Parker reported that the first CEDS focus meeting was held at the Litchfield Inn on March 7 with over 80 participants under the direction of consultant, Mark Waterhouse and volunteer facilitators.

Conclusions: The process is moving forward with positive feedback and interest; the session was a good first step and additional work is to be done including future meetings of individual working groups, more participants in most sectors, more time and coordination, and the need for involvement of a greater number of participants; limited input affected limited output.

N.W. CT ARTS COUNCIL

Outreach Program at Thomaston Opera House- David attended.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

- 1) Tenant (Oliphant-high end jewelry & clothing) found for part of the Preservation Trust building on the Green, formerly occupied by Talbots. There are still 2000 sq. ft. left to lease.
- 2) Headlines Hair Salon in the Litchfield Commons is out of business; Debbie's Pizzazz , a high – end salon from Danbury/New Milford, will move into the vacant space.
- 3) Bantam: Arethusa has permits for Wine Bar to open by summer and also bought the former CT Cut Flower property for possible parking.

STOP and SHOP

While no application has been submitted to P&Z, local developer, Mark Greenberg is leading a project that would move the location of the current Stop and Shop to property he owns in and behind the Litchfield Commons on Route 202 and would also increase the size of the grocery store. These plans are predicated on Stop and Shop expressing the desire/need to move and build a larger facility. Greenberg feels he can do everything needed without having to request any P&Z variances. David Dean expressed concerns - if the store were to be built - about traffic, public safety and 18 Wheel supply trucks(53' bodies). EDC members agreed to monitor this project and take a "wait & see" approach..

LABA

Doug Parker reported that LABA continues to recruit new members. Paul McLaughlin is likely to take the leadership role of LABA in June 2012 replacing Shelly King who has served LABA for the last two years.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONS

- 1) Park and Rec –Kay Carroll
 - a. Easter Egg Hunt –April 6
 - b. Collaborate with Litchfield Women's' Club to plan a community Halloween Party with controlled entrance via distribution of free passes
 - c. Talking with Litchfield Borough about including a bandstand in plans for new Information Booth on the Green
- 2) Litchfield Borough –David Dean
 - a. Attempt to retrieve agendas and minutes is not as easy as it should be. Sporadic availability of minutes and agendas; interruptions in topic coverage from meeting to meeting. David will ask Lisa Losee & Lee Losee for minutes.
 - b. Waiting on bids for repair of Information Booth on the Green (See more discussion on Information Booth under New Business.)
- 3) Conservation Commission – Cleve Fuessenich
 - a. Long-range to acquire open space
 - b. Natural and cultural resources inventory
- 4) P&Z – David Dean
 - a. Minor items – e.g., generators too close to neighbors' borders
 - b. Borough Information Booth
- 5) WPCA – Renée Betar

- a. Standard items +
- b. Arethusa Creamery still does not have a general permit for discharge. Resolving this is a priority.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Town Hall Renovations – tabled until next meeting
- 2) Impact of Chabad lawsuit and appeal – tabled to next meeting
- 3) Information Booth on the Green: Important project that impacts economic development.
 - a. Hard to get information (direction, facts, current stage of project, etc.) from Borough minutes.
 - b. How should EDC proceed? Start with EDC member criteria and ideas:
 - i. Current booth was limited in functionality; not a big footprint; longer-term solution is necessary.
 - ii. Historically consistent
 - iii. Opportunity to review or provide input to specs, RFP and bids?
 - iv. Step 1 = architectural design; 24/7 functionality to accommodate staffed and un-staffed; accessible kiosk model was suggested.
 - v. Step 2 = funding possibilities –Seherr-Toss and Preservation Trust
 - c. David will contact Lee Losee to determine the current stage of the Info Booth replacement/repair project and whether/when community/commission input will be solicited.
 - d. Possible EDC sub-committee –Doug Parker volunteered.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Anthea Disney, retired media executive and current consultant on Women's Enterprise Initiative, is interested in a position on the EDC. David will check political affiliation requirements.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 25, 2012 at the Litchfield Town Hall at 7 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Kay Carroll made a motion to adjourn. Doug Parker seconded it. It passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renée Betar, Acting Secretary
Economic Development Commission
David E. Dean, Chr.