EDC Regular Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2021
Zoom: Remote Meeting by Live internet Stream and Phone

Minutes (draft)
1) Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Cleve Fuessenich, Chair.
   Present:  Regular Members: Renée Betar, Cleve Fuessenich, Anne Haas, Will Neary and Tom Roman
             Alternate Members: Christine Harding, DJ Murphy and Lindsey Turner
             Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectwoman, Litchfield
   Absent:  Regular Members: Michele Murelli and Bea Thompson
            Alternate Member: Eric DuPont
2) Appointment of Alternate: Lindsey Turner for M. Murelli; DJ Murphy for Bea Thompson;
3) Public Comment:
   a. Burke Gibney: Interested resident - observing
   b. Litchfield Farmers Forum team:
      i. Attorney Jim Stedronsky representing Litchfield CT Farmers Forum
      ii. Barbara Putnam: Farm owner, assisting with drafting new P&Z regulations
      iii. Harvey Hubbell: Chanticleer Acres Farm
      iv. Joan Nichols: Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau
      v. Amy Dyer: Chanticleer Acres Farm
   The Farmers Forum team shared its mission referencing POCD; explained its plans for moving forward
   with proposing new P&Z regulations that could expand uses for farm properties that focus on
   sustainability through generations; and requested EDC’s support and suggestions throughout the
   process.

   Initial focus is on strategy to develop a Right-To-Farm ordinance by early Fall 2021. EDC is eager to
   continue this discussion and help the agricultural sector diversify its activities while respecting
   neighboring property owners. The long-term effect is to help secure that farmland remains farmland for
   generations versus housing or other industry development.

   DJ Murphy invited the Litchfield Farmers Forum team to the next LABA meeting on May 18.
4) Motion by W. Neary to approve draft minutes of the March 31, 2021 regular meeting; DJ Murphy
   seconded the motion. Six members voted aye; one abstention (A. Haas); the motion carried.

5) Update: Review recent changes in Litchfield that affect economic activity
   i. Bantam Historical Society is working on the building that houses the antique carriage
      and improving the Bantam River Park area.
   ii. St. Paul’s Church is expanding parking.
   iii. Brierwood Nurseries is open for the season.
   iv. Bantam Cinema group will be ready to announce latest plans in early May.
   v. Silly Sprout is moving to retail space near the entrance to White Memorial.
   vi. Caribbean restaurant is planning to move into former jail building.
6) EDC task force updates
   a. Events: tabled
b. **Marketing and Branding Litchfield: L. Turner and W. Neary**
   i. Team shared news and gratitude for funding received from:
      1. Seherr-Thoss grant - $23,500
      2. Litchfield Education - $10,000
      3. White Flower Farm - $5,000
   ii. L. Turner will meet with D. Clement (Boardwalk Media + Communications) to expand marketing plans to re-brand and promote Litchfield via Visit Litchfield CT and other channels.

c. **Tourism**
   i. **Western CT Tourism District:**
      1. T. Roman reported that the District will launch:
         a. a new *Say Yes CT* campaign on May 1;
         b. Train rides from Waterbury to Torrington featuring Fascia chocolates and wine. Members questioned whether it’s possible to include a stop in E. Litchfield for shuttles to vineyards and town centers.
      2. EDC will monitor District activities.
   ii. **Info Booth update**
      1. Booth is ready to open May 1 with returning and a few new volunteers.
      2. Volunteers are needed to staff the Booth, and businesses and organizations can deliver literature to the Booth. For more information email rbetar@optonline.net

7) **Old and Unfinished Business**
   a. **LABA update:**
      i. Next LABA meeting at Wisdom House on May 18 at noon.
      ii. Working on two new maps - businesses and non-profits
   b. **“National Days” campaign:**
      i. A. Haas successfully promoted “Joe Day” through LABA website.
      ii. L. Turner suggested D. Clement could help with future national days.
   c. **Small Business Forum:** First Monday of each month at 9:00 a.m. Next Forum is May 3. Focus will be strategies to promote being outside again and “welcome back”.

8) **New Business**
   a. Renewing our vows - committing to EDC's goals for '21 and beyond
      i. W. Neary led the charge to members to:
         1. reflect on what accepting additional funding means for EDC; and
         2. re-commit to sharing their strengths and deciding how to help in the coming months as we build a plan for EDC’s changes and next big steps.
      ii. Members should be prepared to share their thoughts by the May meeting.
      iii. L. Turner will share details of EDC’s commitment to fulfill criteria of new funding.
   b. EDC facilitate organizing Merchants on the Green group (from 04-05-21 Small Business Forum)
      i. C. Harding accepted the lead role of talking to merchants on the Green for feedback, suggestions and interest in forming a merchant group.
   c. Small Business Week on May 2 – 8 - will not happen now.
   d. Other new projects and initiatives – let’s focus on tackling what we have.
9) Adjourn
   Motion to adjourn meeting made by A. Haas; T. Roman seconded the motion. All voted aye and the
   motion carried.

   Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

   Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 26, 2021.

   Respectfully submitted,

   Renée Betar
   Secretary, Litchfield Economic Development Commission