EDC Regular Meeting Minutes
May 26, 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, Michele Murelli, Will Neary and Tom Roman
   Alternate Members: Christine Harding-Abbott, DJ Murphy and Lindsey Turner
   Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectwoman, Litchfield
   Absent: Regular Members: Anne Haas and Bea Thompson
   Alternate Member: Eric DuPont

2) Appointment of Alternate: L. Turner for A. Haas; C. Harding-Abbott for B. Thompson

3) Public Comment:
   a. Burke Gibney: Interested resident – observing
   b. Danielle Muecke: New Litchfield resident and co-business owner, Muecke Design & Construction; interested in filling an EDC vacancy as a member.
   c. Litchfield Farmers Forum team:
      i. Attorney Jim Stedronsky representing Litchfield Farmers Alliance
      ii. Attorney Jonathan Meter representing Litchfield Farmers Alliance
      iii. Barbara Putnam: Farm owner, assisting with drafting new P&Z regulations
      iv. Harvey Hubbell: Chanticleer Acres Farm and Litchfield Farmers Alliance
      v. Amy Dyer: Chanticleer Acres Farm and Litchfield Farmers Alliance
      vi. Annie McAward: supporting Litchfield Farmers Alliance
      vii. Kellie Devan: supporting Litchfield Farmers Alliance

   B. Putnam shared the group’s status and new name, Litchfield Farmers Alliance, to replace former name of Litchfield Farmers Forum to avoid confusion with the annual Farmers Forum offered by the Partners for Sustainable Healthy Communities (PSHC).

   Attorney Stedronsky detailed the draft Right-To-Farm ordinance that was previously shared with EDC members. Questions and feedback from members on the draft ordinance should be sent to R. Betar. Feedback will be sent to Attorney Stedronsky, who plans to return to the EDC June 30 meeting. C. Fuessenich and D. Rapp discussed the possible alignment of the draft ordinance and the town’s sustainability practices. D. Rapp offered to bring the ordinance to the BOS meeting on June 1 for further discussion.

4) Motion by L. Turner to approve draft minutes of the April 28, 2021 regular meeting; W. Neary seconded the motion. All members voted aye; the motion carried.

5) Update: Review recent changes in Litchfield that affect economic activity
   i. @ the Corner is expanding and adding Mexican food by summertime.
   ii. Jennifer Terzian opened a gallery on the lower level of the South St. block.
   iii. Hope and Honey opened a boutique gift shop on the lower level of South St block. The owners, Leah Blake and daughter, Bella plan to donate a portion of the shop’s proceeds to help fight human trafficking.
   iv. Kitty and Felix Sambuco are closer to opening Espresso 59, an espresso, gelato and sorbetto café in the former Murphy’s Pharmacy building.
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6) EDC task force updates
   a. Events:
      i. M. Murelli is working with John Morosani and D. Raap to determine the best organizational structure for establishing a Litchfield Arts Council. If the structure is a new commission, the entity would follow the same rules as the other municipal commissions.
      ii. For details on some local events including fireworks and drive-in movies, visit Litchfield Park and Rec
   b. Marketing and Branding Litchfield: L. Turner and W. Neary
      i. The EDC marketing team is collaborating with Kate Zullo and the Litchfield Historical Society to highlight the Museum’s re-opening on June 24.
      ii. L. Turner will meet with D. Clement (Boardwalk Media + Communications) to expand marketing plans to re-brand and promote Litchfield.
   c. Tourism
      i. Western CT Tourism District:
         1. The District is looking for full-time clerks for the state’s information areas that are re-opening this summer.
         2. Litchfield is being considered as one of the best 15 small CT towns to be featured in a Smithsonian Magazine digital article. T. Roman will work with D. Raap to provide information needed.
      ii. National Days promo: W. Neary shared that July 21 is National Hot Dog Day and suggested that the EDC events team with the marketing and branding team can collaborate with Colleen Kinkade (Litchfield Park and Rec) to promote a town-wide event with a “top dog” contest.
      iii. Info Booth update: Despite weather interruptions, the booth has been staffed Thursdays through Sundays with a team of 6-8 regulars who are starting to capture zip codes and email addresses.
   d. LABA update:
      i. Next LABA meeting at Litchfield Community Center on June 15 at noon. Village Restaurant is providing lunch.
      ii. Sixty more welcome bags will be filled with new items and delivered to Litchfield’s newest residents.
         1. D. Muecke shared her response as a newer resident to her welcome bag:
            a. Thank you! History of town was helpful.
            b. What’s missing is a directory of area businesses, especially services.
         2. EDC action item: C. Harding-Abbott and L. Turner will lead a team to complete an EDC directory using information from C. Fuessenich’s lists and the Discover Litchfield Hills business list, which EDC members can help verify and update by calling each business listed.
   e. Small Business Forum: Online meeting on the first Monday of each month at 9:00 a.m. Next Forum is June 7. Check the Litchfield town Facebook page for Zoom link.

7) Old and Unfinished Business
   a. Renewing our vows - committing to EDC's goals for '21 and beyond:

Litchfield Economic Development Commission Mission Statement (adopted 06/10/2020)
The mission is to promote sustainable economic diversity for Litchfield.
LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Members re-committed and articulated specifically how they could use their skills to serve on the EDC.

b. EDC facilitates organizing Merchants on the Green group:
C. Harding-Abbott began visiting merchants on the Green and requested that merchants complete the survey she created. Continued conversations with merchants and information from completed surveys will help determine current needs of merchants and solutions needed to remove some obstacles to growth.

8) New Business

a. EDC Election of officers for 2021-2022 to be held on June 30, 2021: How the process works.
   i. C. Fuessenich detailed the protocol for how nominations and elections work.
      1. Officers to be elected: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
      2. Term of service is one year
      3. Nominations are made from the floor by any seated EDC member.
   ii. Some members shared their intentions and qualifications for nominations and elections.
   iii. In anticipation of June 30 elections, the following actions need to be taken at the June 3 or June 15 BOS meeting:
      1. L. Turner to resign as Alternate Member, and request appointment as Regular Member;
      2. R. Betar to resign as Regular Member, and request appointment as Alternate Member; and
      3. C. Harding-Abbott to resign as Alternate Member and request appointment as Regular Member.
      4. Members whose status has changed and been approved by the BOS are required to be sworn in by Town Clerk, Lisa Losee by the June 30 elections.

b. CT Open House Day -June 12: Only one entity, The First Congregational Church, is listed as participating in the virtual CT Open House Day. Other businesses and entities should register for this free event if they are interested in participating.

c. Consider applying for CT Historical District designation (like Ridgefield’s Cultural District designation): Tabled

d. Other new projects and initiatives: Tabled

9) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting made by W. Neary; C. Harding-Abbott seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Renée Betar
Secretary, Litchfield Economic Development Commission

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