LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes · DRAFT

February 23, 2022
Bantam Annex
80 Doyle Road
Bantam, CT 06750

• Meeting called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Will Neary, Chair.

PRESENT

Regular members: Will Neary, Lindsey Turner, L. Cleveland Fuessenich, Michele Murelli
Alternate members: D.J. Murphy, Tara-Marie Lynch
Members of the public: Doug Clement, Harmony Tanguay
Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectman, Litchfield

ABSENT

Regular members: Thomas Roman, Danielle Muecke, Christine Harding
Alternate members: Renee Betar, Lelah Campo

• Appointment of alternate voting member(s) for meeting:
  ○ D.J. Murphy
  ○ Tara-Marie Lynch

• Public comment:
  ○ New business hurdles:
    ■ M. Murelli spoke on behalf of Charlie Dumais; Dumais was going to voice a few of the obstacles he faced when trying to open Superior Foods (e.g., zoning)
    ■ A person raised similar business obstacles to LABA (re: sandwich boards)
    ■ L. Cleveland Fuessenich mentioned he invited owner of The Discerning Palate to future EDC meeting to share feedback re: opening new business
    ■ Who is the body who can help troubleshoot these new business issues?
    ■ Would EDC be the appropriate point of contact for fielding concerns?
  ○ L. Cleveland Fuessenich (speaking as a former Litchfield courthouse member) mentioned there is a meeting on 3/1 before the Zoning Board of Appeals (and other
regulatory bodies like the Litchfield Historic District) to hear purchaser of the courthouse and resolve a zoning question — courthouse to turn into a boutique hotel.

- Motion by M. Murelli to approve draft minutes of the January 26, 2022 regular meeting; D.J. Murphy seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

- EDC task force updates:
  - Marketing and Branding Litchfield (D. Clement, H. Tanguay)
    - Website launched 2/12/22
    - T. Lynch and D. Raap circulated feedback 2/14/22
    - D. Clement explained next steps are to improve photos, change things up seasonally, add blog posts, push email signups, etc.
    - L. Turner mentioned freebie opt-in to entice people to sign up
    - D. Clement to circulate schedule of email newsletter content (end goal is for user to be able to connect with Litchfield in ways they weren't aware of — e.g., nature, dining, food, events)
    - Encourage people and businesses to share their positive feedback to the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, etc. — perhaps the right forum for this is at the next LABA meeting on 3/15 at Haight-Brown Vineyard
    - M. Murelli knows someone who can offer drone services for future
  - Restaurant Week (L. Turner): prioritize winter months to attract business during times when it's more difficult to attract patrons (February 2023)
  - Opening a Business in Litchfield (C. Harding) — N/A

- 2022 goals and events
  - Tentpole events — aim for at least once per quarter:
    - Q1 (February): Restaurant week
    - April 23: D. Raap noted that Sustainable Litchfield and SMART task force are hosting an Earth Day event at the high school from 9am-12pm:
      - 9am-12pm: Grab bag at high school, get road assignment, pick up trash
      - 12-1pm: lunch
      - 1-3pm: tables and presenters (e.g., “How to Start a Business” or “Promoting Sustainable Business” maybe for EDC?)
    - Q2 (June): Road race
    - Q3 (July): Sidewalk festival
      - Tents and porch concerts
      - North and South Street
      - Maybe block off portions of West Street alleyways
      - L. Turner to present to Borough of Litchfield since we'd utilize sidewalks
• D.J. Murphy proposed to also allow businesses outside of the green to come bring tents / booths on the green

■ Q3 (September/October): Fall fest
  • Pie baking contest (involve local farms — blueberry, apple, etc.)
  • Hot cider
  • Historical society tour
  • Tie it into Scarecrows in the Meadow

■ Q4 (December): Holiday stroll
■ Other ideas: hot dog contest, tractor parade, etc.

• LABA (D.J. Murphy):
  ○ 3/15 meeting: Haight-Brown Vineyard (bag-stuffing event)
  ○ 4/19 meeting: Keystone Place

• Western CT Tourism (T. Roman):
  ○ Western CT Tourism has a $300-400K budget to promote western region
  ○ Invite Noelle Stevenson (Director at Connecticut Office of Tourism) to future meeting?

• Litchfield as CT film hub (R. Betar) — N/A

• Litchfield affordable housing (C. Fuessenich)
  ○ [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LitchfieldWorker](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LitchfieldWorker)
  ○ Steering Committee has been assembled and survey (above) has been distributed
  ○ 3/8: Town meeting regarding Litchfield affordable housing, open to public

• Old and unfinished business:
  ○ Info booth approval from borough

• New business:
  ○ 2022 schedule (meetings, programs, events, budget request) — see above notes under “2022 goals and events”
  ○ New business in town — any formal role for EDC?
    ■ LABA issues welcome bags to new residents (using MLS / land transfers)
    ■ Perhaps EDC can issue a “welcome” to new businesses?
    ■ One way to be in the loop re: new businesses opening in town is to request updates from the Litchfield Town Assessor’s office (though while this includes LLC storefronts, it excludes home-based businesses); D. Raap to look into...

• Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting made by W. Neary; M. Murelli seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.
Next regular meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Tara-Marie Lynch
Litchfield Economic Development Commission

*Litchfield Economic Development Commission Mission Statement (adopted 06/10/2020):*
*The mission is to promote sustainable economic diversity for Litchfield.*