



LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes · **DRAFT**

April 27, 2022
Bantam Annex
80 Doyle Road
Bantam, CT 06750

- Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Will Neary, Chair.

PRESENT *Regular members:* Will Neary, Lindsey Turner, L. Cleveland
Fuessenich, Michele Murelli, Renee Betar, Tara-Marie Lynch
Alternate members: D.J. Murphy
Members of the public: None

ABSENT *Regular members:* Danielle Muecke, Thomas Roman
Alternate members: Lelah Campo
Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectman, Litchfield

- Appointment of alternate voting member(s) for meeting: R. Betar, D.J. Murphy
- Public comment: N/A
- Motion by L. Turner to approve draft minutes of the March 30, 2022 regular meeting; M. Murelli seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- EDC task force updates:
 - Marketing and Branding Litchfield (D. Clement): N/A
 - Opening a Business in Litchfield (D. Muecke): REVISIT during 5/25/2022 meeting
 - Litchfield Merchandise:
 - Consider Litchfield-branded merchandise — promoted through an e-commerce plug-in via the website, highlighted in booklet with QR code, shared via social media, and supported by local businesses / artists
 - Exciting potential although we should determine if EDC is appropriate vehicle

- To discuss: upfront costs, what we'd choose to offer first, where we would sell from (information booth, visitlitchfieldct.com site, etc.), and so on...
- One idea could be to "pilot" this with a one-off "Litchfield local basket giveaway" campaign across social media platforms, where we upload a photo of the basket and all its goodies / prompt users to tag 3 local friends — then we choose one lucky winner at random who will receive the SWAG (other options for piloting could be via LABA welcome bags, forthcoming newsletter, website landing page, etc.)
 - D.J. Murphy will review addendum and advise on which set of wearables or printables we might be able to do via Murphy Boyz for this initial lot of one-off branded items
 - T. Lynch can draft template email from EDC to local Litchfield makers of goods (e.g., honey, spirits, chocolates, syrup, handmade items) asking if they would be interested in donating their items to be included in the basket *as well as* requesting that they pass along the opportunity to any other local businesses or individuals who may want to be included too
 - EDC will want to be inclusive of everyone who wishes to participate (and intends to do several rounds and phases of the basket to allow more opportunities for participation down the road as project evolves)
- From there, we still can proceed with a conservative, phased rollout:
 - We can also consider adding it to a future LABA meeting agenda to gauge interest from local business owners themselves re: "host baskets" (including sites like the new boutique hotels)
 - EDC can even do an interim step too — where we assemble a set of limited quantities available on a first-come / first-served basis centered around attracting attendance to tentpole events (e.g., 50 Litchfield local baskets will be available for purchase at the next event XYZ)
 - Reach goal would be to pull this off in time for Litchfield Hills Road Race (or perhaps the first pilot lives on its on, via social media, and we integrate at future events from there — whenever they may fall)
 - Implement polls on social media (or via forthcoming newsletter or via website) to gauge interest in whether people might be interested in buying "Litchfield local baskets" en masse or as gifts
- Will need to do a much deeper dive if we ever choose to, down the road, systematize this operation with respect to fulfillment logistics, e-commerce (e.g., Shopify) integration on the website, municipal restrictions, financial processes, required approval, terms for reinvesting revenue back into the EDC mission, etc. — all of which requires proof of concept and demand before taking this idea to the next level

- LABA (D.J. Murphy):
 - 50-55 people at latest meeting
 - Upcoming meeting on May 17 will take place at Camp Chinqueka (Mount Tom) and will feature Chris Leone, superintendent of schools, for 30 minutes discussing regionalization
 - June meeting will involve stuffing the next round of welcome bags for new residents (maybe this time we can implement the 'general welcome' letter along with other helpful information to newcomers like how to register to vote, what the recycling center hours are, etc.)

- Western CT Tourism (T. Roman): N/A

- Old and unfinished business: N/A
 - Former Litchfield courthouse-to-boutique-hotel project plan review (C. Fuessenich):
 - C. Fuessenich circulated preliminary drawings and write-up from Paul R. Hinkel
 - Courthouse is 100% owned by The Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust (no individual has any stake in it)
 - EDC members generally support and endorse the project as long as parking is adequate and well planned
 - W. Neary opens up a vote to EDC members for endorsement of the project; R. Betar seconds the motion — endorsement passes unanimously
 - NWCT Arts Council grant for \$150K (L. Turner):
 - Litchfield as a town entity can't apply but we could support an application with a local organization and expand the efforts and reach
 - More details: <https://www.artsnwct.org/creative-partnerships-grant>
 - Timeline: <https://www.artsnwct.org/timeline-and-process>
 - May 25, 2022: Information session
 - June 2022: Information session (specific date to follow)
 - July 2022: Information session (specific date to follow)
 - August 1, 2022: Applications open
 - October 31, 2022: Applications close
 - November 2022: Review period / awardees selected
 - December 2022: Funds disbursed (only first round of funds for awards of \$10K or more)
 - May 2023: Status reports due (second round of funds for awards of \$10K or more released upon review of status report)
 - October 2023: Final reports due
 - Exhaustive list of businesses in Litchfield:
 - C. Fussenich to circulate and/or bring the list of businesses in Litchfield he's been working on and codifying over the years

- D. Raap to circulate and/or bring list of businesses in Litchfield as provided via Town Assessor's office
 - B. Paynter to send export of businesses from Discover Litchfield Hills interactive map for EDC distribution
 - D. Raap / L. Turner to advise re: potential itinerary for Noelle Stevenson's visit to the area (originally scheduled for May but now is in the process of being rescheduled)
- New business:
 - Print a custom "Visit Litchfield CT" QR code to post in the window of Litchfield's information booth (T. Lynch to draft and circulate)
 - R. Betar and L. Turner to check re: fiscal year budget (e.g., rollover) as well as funding terms (e.g., Seherr-Thoss Foundations)
 - "Live in Litchfield" series (social media livestream) has commenced via L. Turner with 20-minute bite-sized interviews featuring local programming, organizations, etc.
 - C. Fuessenich suggests considering new / more "Welcome to Litchfield" signs (like Washington had done)
- Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting made by W. Neary; M. Murelli seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled for May 25, 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.*