



LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes · DRAFT

May 25, 2022
Bantam Annex
80 Doyle Road
Bantam, CT 06750

- Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Lindsey Turner, Vice Chair.

PRESENT *Regular members:* Lindsey Turner, L. Cleveland Fuessenich, Tara-Marie Lynch, Danielle Muecke, Michele Murelli
Alternate members: D.J. Murphy, Renee Betar
Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectman, Litchfield
Members of the public: None

ABSENT *Regular members:* Will Neary, Thomas Roman
Alternate members: Lelah Campo

- Appointment of alternate voting member(s) for meeting: R. Betar
- Public comment: N/A
- Motion by M. Murelli to approve draft minutes of the April 27, 2022 regular meeting; M. Muecke seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- Women's Development Council (L. Turner):
 - WBDC Equity Match Grant Application opportunity
 - "The Women's Business Development Council's Opportunity Fund is pleased to announce the opening of a new application period for the Equity Match Grant (EMG) Program. Cash grants between \$2,500 and \$10,000 will be awarded to qualified women-owned small businesses in Connecticut for clearly-defined projects that will have a measurable impact on the business, its growth and profitability. The grant

funds cannot be used towards operating expenses, payroll, or real estate improvements. Applicants are required to provide a minimum 25% match.”

- EDC task force updates:
 - Marketing and Branding Litchfield
 - Weekly interviews (L. Turner):
 - Every Wednesday, Lindsey hosts a new member of the community for a live interview via Instagram / Facebook
 - For now, we will continue focusing on nonprofit leaders
 - D.J. Murphy recommended (if we ever branch out beyond nonprofits) potentially interviewing local real estate agent Jade Athas of Berkshire Hathaway)
 - Visit Litchfield CT pamphlet (L. Turner):
 - First draft is finalized and being printed by May 27, 2022
 - Copies will be ready and at the information booth in time for MDW
 - Can distribute additional copies to businesses around town thereafter
 - Next step is to figure out the revenue portion (for monetizing the pamphlet); L. Turner will discuss logistics with D. Raap
 - D.J. Murphy suggested reserving some (e.g., 75) pamphlets to stuff into next round of LABA bags
 - Opening a Business in Litchfield (D. Muecke):
 - D. Muecke presents flowchart draft for helping new business owners coming to Litchfield (assuming they have a business plan together)
 - Sample outline of steps:
 - Start with the state (business.ct.gov)
 - Find a location (local real estate agents)
 - Ensure you meet with the appropriate town members for understanding the important details — for instance, proper zoning for intended use, signage rules, requirements (like architectural drawings and permits) for C/O, additional entities like historic commissions to involve, Certificate of Adoption of Trade Name, etc.
 - Ready. Set. Network!
 - LABA
 - Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce
 - Northwest Connecticut Arts Council
 - EDC
 - Etc.
 - C. Fussenich noted that SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) is another great resource

- Add to the flowchart: "This document has been prepared by the Economic Development Commission. If you have insights, suggestions, or questions, please join us at our monthly meetings."
- Remove specific names from the flowchart and instead list position and phone numbers (to be evergreen)
- Art Tripping (M. Murelli):
 - Desire to develop an arts district (two, in fact: Bantam and Litchfield) — public art, featured murals, etc.
 - Have kids that do woodwork and build "billboards" for displaying art and have art students learn art history as they design them
 - Once per month do a salon at the meadow where there is a food truck, artists can bring their artwork, picnic, etc.
 - Once per month have street musicians in the center of town
 - Mont Marte — outdoor art gallery (viewing) for a day
 - For everything above, we must properly investigate which municipalities and commissions need to sign off on such initiatives
- Litchfield merchandise (T. Lynch):
 - TIMING: Aim for a July timeframe for the initial social media giveaway campaign phase; perhaps it's better to debut on digital first (i.e. not affixed to an event like the road race)
 - PHASES: After the pilot, we can / should consider tethering "limited quantities" to future tentpole events the EDC is involved in
 - MERCH:
 - T. Lynch sent along suggested bundles of branded apparel as quoted by D.J. Murphy via Murphy Boyz to W. Neary and L. Turner (awaiting their response w.r.t. budget)
 - NOTE: 3-week lead time
 - LOCAL GOODS (ideas):
 - Litchfield Distillery (spirits)
 - Bunnell Farm (dry rub)
 - Arethusa (gift card?)
 - Thorncrest (chocolate)
 - Troy Brook (wooden serveware)
 - Meadow Ridge Farm (syrup)
 - Bantam Tile (specialty item)
 - Berry Ledges (honey)
 - Guy Wolff (pottery)
 - Etc.
 - Proposed draft email template to abovementioned businesses:

"Greetings from the Economic Development Commission of Litchfield! This summer, we're planning to do a "Litchfield Local Basket" giveaway on social media — featuring a collection of Litchfield-branded items as well as local goods from businesses like yours. This is purely a pilot project and (if there is enough continued interest) the "basket" can evolve and adapt over time. Would [insert business name] be interested in participating? It could be great exposure. Please let us know if you are interested in donating [insert specific product(s)] to be included in the basket which will be pushed out across 'Visit Litchfield CT' channels — including via our Facebook and Instagram platforms which are nearing 5K followers. Moreover, if you know of any other local businesses or individuals who may be interested as well, we strongly encourage that you pass along / mention this opportunity to them as well. In the absence of a mass distribution list, we have to rely on word-of-mouth to get folks involved...although, as mentioned earlier, we hope there will be more opportunities for participation down the road as the project (basket) evolves. Kindly reply by the end of the month — no later than May 31, 2022 — if you are interested."

- LABA (D.J. Murphy):
 - June 25, 2022 is the next meeting — pizza lunch at Litchfield Community Center
 - Most recent meeting involved Region 20 idea
- Information Booth (R. Betar):
 - The information booth is open and busy!
 - R. Betar mentioned lots of people want a bulletin board; D. Raap mentioned there are two glass cases with bulletin boards near the municipal bathroom if we are interested in utilizing that space as well
 - C. Fussenich plans to paint the back door
- Western CT Tourism (T. Roman): N/A
- New EDC members / candidates:
 - Two alternate seats (T. Lynch, D.J. Murphy) are vacant
 - One regular member seat (D. Muecke) is vacant
- Old and unfinished business: N/A
- Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting made by L. Turner; M. Murelli seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled for June 29, 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.