



LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2022

Bantam Annex

80 Doyle Road

Bantam, CT 06750

1. Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Will Neary, Chair.

PRESENT *Regular members:* Will Neary, L. Cleveland Fuessenich,
Thomas Roman, Michele Murelli, Tara-Marie Bares
Alternate members: Renee Betar, Cailyn Paradise, Missy Lafferty
Members of the public: Doug Clement
Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectman, Litchfield

ABSENT *Regular members:* Lindsey Turner, Lelah Campo
Alternate members: N/A

2. Appointment of alternate voting member(s) for meeting, as needed: Cailyn Paradise.

3. Public comment:

- Megan Harpin — The Spa at Litchfield Hills (megan@litchfield-spa.com)
 - National event to boost “shop small” (by AMEX) on the day after Black Friday
 - Referenced L. Mahieu’s passport program initiative in the past
 - Focus on shops and boutiques (there were restaurants involved prior but there are too many to include and this is about holiday shopping and boosting foot traffic — so they came up with an idea for “local eats” where people with the passport can simply attach any receipt from any Litchfield restaurant)
 - Recap from most recent campaign: 70 “postcards” came back more than 50% filled with “stamps” (1/3 with restaurant receipts attached)
 - D. Raap to send M. Harpin the latest email list of businesses
 - T. Lynch to send the updated Visitors’ Guide PDF
 - M. Harpin will send social media creative to:
 - D. Raap who will share and spread the word via Town of Litchfield website and social accounts

- Recommended also sending information to D.J. Murphy for LABA (also ask for his LABA email distribution list)
 - EDC will share “call to participation” on VLCT social media channels
 - C. Fuessenich recommended also sending to John McKenna (litchfield.bz)
- 4. Motion by M. Murelli to approve draft minutes of the September 28, 2022 regular meeting; C. Fuessenich seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- 5. New EDC members / candidates:
 - Welcome voting member Lelah Campo (absent)
 - Welcome alternate members Missy Lafferty and Cailyn Paradise
- 6. EDC task force updates:
 - Marketing and branding Litchfield
 - Pamphlet
 - Sponsors vs. ad space
 - W. Neary described path that was taken for sponsorships
 - T. Roman mentioned that Northwest CT Tourism is allowing an exchange of collateral so we should look into doing this as well
 - Research Litchfield Airbnb hosts and suggest they include visitlitchfieldct.com website in their listing descriptions and also have them grab a copy of the Visitors’ Guide for having in their Airbnb
 - New design by T. Lynch / updates from D. Clement
 - *Favorite* to be removed for future print run
 - Additional bids for higher quality printing?
 - Digital properties (D. Clement)
 - D. Clement gave a report on great organic search and organic social media driven traffic to the website
 - T. Lynch suggested exploring paid campaigns now that we have a more substantial budget
 - M. Lafferty recommended posting about working in YARDwork (showcasing other elements of Litchfield like working remotely from coworking space)
 - D. Raap inquired about schools since they’ve supported this in some part (we should flesh out their descriptions a bit more on the website)
 - “Made in Litchfield” initiative (T. Lynch)
 - Merch order fulfillment in progress!
 - Water bottle / computer stickers
 - Baseball caps
 - Long-sleeve shirts
 - Picnic-on-the-green blankets
 - Local makers secured:
 - “Litchfield” coffee table book copies
 - Winter Winds Farm syrup
 - C.P. Farmhouse zippered Litchfield, CT pouches

- Blueprint CT's "Litchfield" etched wooden cutting board
- Bantam Frameworks frames for custom graphic design
- Ace Hardware for branded Litchfield merchandise (e.g., keychains)
- Litchfield Distillery nips and swag
- M. Murelli children's coloring books
- Haight-Brown Vineyard \$5-off wine flights
- Berry Ledges honey jars
- Bunnell Farm dry rub
- Bantam Tileworks ceramic pieces
- Troy Brook wooden spoons
- Next steps:
 - Collect all final items
 - Photograph / stitch together video of assembled basket (must be high-quality and engaging and buzzworthy)
 - Lay groundwork with local social media influencers for amplification
 - Ensure captions describe all who contributed (as well as standalone slide of logos accompanying the post)
 - IMPORTANT: T. Lynch stated it will be important to keep the local merchants and businesses in the loop during the campaign (e.g., tagging them but also give a postmortem on its success to fuel future iterations); the more involved and more communicative we are about ROI, the better
- Signage for local merchants, stores, restaurants with VLCT QR code to print and distribute:
 - T. Lynch to take this on and design it
 - D. Raap would even print QR code on *The Village* placemat (could be a great idea for other restaurants who have printed paper placemats)
 - T. Lynch motions to fund \$100 for plastic placards for QR code printouts for restaurants; W. Neary seconded and all voted aye and the motion carried.

7. Holiday Stroll

- Colleen Kinkade will no longer be at Park & Recreation by November 2022
- Commission will now has to take and run with the Holiday Stroll

8. Restaurant Week

- EDC is tentatively looking to March 2023
- Someone has to play point for this — M. Murelli will start by outlining a strategy
- T. Lynch recommended looking at other towns' Restaurant Weeks / last year's minutes

9. Information Booth (R. Betar)

- Information booth is closing for the season on November 1
- R. Betar suggested putting a P sign on the Town Hall for parking (lots of people ask about this) — though parking is only available on weekends
- Information booth has to go to the borough every year
- Information booth has been very busy the past few weeks; sidewalks crowded

10. Old and unfinished business:

- Secretary volunteer?
- Borough of Bantam notetaking post (maybe once they are secured, we can ask if they want an additional role); \$20/hr per D. Raap

11. New business:

- Charging stations — by end of December, we'll know whether we have secured \$226K per D. Raap (W. Neary said this would be great to post about via VLCT channels)
- M. Murelli — CT Ballet under the stars (full-day event with classes for kids during the day and ballet performance in the evening); Summer 2023
- M. Murelli — Re: Litchfield Makers Market, Borough of Litchfield is issuing a survey to merchants on the green and has put a moratorium on any events held on the green until those survey results are compiled
- T. Roman reports the state is bringing tour buses:
 - They're looking for suggestions from towns for bus tour
 - E.g., 55 people on a bus
 - D. Raap said many local restaurants could probably house that many people
 - EDC members should offer itinerary ideas and send to susanh@ctvisit.com
- D. Raap recommends having a summit in the spring (e.g., Litchfield Community Center) with all the local economic development groups — each EDC sends one or two representatives that can speak and report on what they've been doing and what's been successful

12. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting made by W. Neary; C. Fuessenich seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Tara-Marie Lynch
Litchfield Economic Development Commission