



LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes · DRAFT

March 29, 2023
Bantam Annex
80 Doyle Road
Bantam, CT 06750

1. Meeting called to order at 7:14 p.m. by Lindsey Turner.

PRESENT *Regular members:* Lindsey Turner, Thomas Roman, Michele Murelli, L. Cleveland Fuessenich, Tara-Marie Bares (remote)
Alternate members: Renee Betar, Missy Lafferty, Cailyn Paradise,
Members of the public: Doug Clement, Orion Newall, Dan Keefe and Bob Green (remote)

ABSENT *Regular member:* Will Neary

2. Appointment of alternate voting member for meeting: Renée Betar
3. Motion by Michele Murelli to approve draft minutes of the February 27, 2023 special meeting, as amended; Renée Betar seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
4. Naugatuck Railroad (NRR)
 - Orion Newall (NRR Passenger Operations Director): O. Newall made a dynamic presentation on economic, historic and community opportunities available to Litchfield if the E. Litchfield train platform were rehabilitated, even with a temporary platform, which could be built by NRR in one week. T. Roman provided a three-page summary of this potential project.
 - First step is to hire a professional to conduct a survey to determine who owns the land. T. Roman presented a survey proposal and bid prepared by Robert Green Associates to help determine who owns the land.
 - L. Turner will determine if EDC needs to get more than one bid before a motion can be made to move forward with this step.
 - East Litchfield Village Improvement Society (ELVIS) might be a resource for some funds to conduct the survey.
 - Dan Keefe (East Litchfield resident and historian and [Railroad Museum of New England](#) board member): An active, renovated E. Litchfield train depot platform is a likely vehicle for supporting business and tourism in and outside the center of Litchfield as well as for preserving the depot's history.

- Robert Green (Robert Green Associates – Surveyors and Engineers, Terryville, CT): available for questions

5. EDC Task Force updates:

- Marketing and Branding Litchfield update – D. Clement
Activity on [VisitLitchfieldCT](#) in the last seven days was overwhelmingly positive and related to Restaurant Week with 3.300 unique opens on RW page; 700 reading blogs; traffic up 300%; and engagement/likes increasing from a typical 100 to 300-400.
- Visit Litchfield pamphlet reprint – sponsorship update: No update

6. Restaurant Week (RW)

- Update and post-event survey – L. Turner, T-M Bares
- Anecdotally, RW is a resounding success (perceived as an increase in business for restaurant owners and extremely satisfied patrons). Thanks to all who made EDC's first Restaurant Week happen.
- A post-event survey to restaurants will help more clearly measure success, solicit what restaurants liked, gather suggestions for improvements, and evaluate changes for the next RW. L. Turner, T-M Bares and M. Lafferty will work on drafting the survey.
- RW's success re-affirms EDC's strategy to focus on a few tent-pole events each year that can be repeated in future years. After RW follow-up, it's time to identify and focus on a summer event including a possible series of porch concerts.

7. New Businesses in Litchfield in '23 – R. Betar shared that identifying newly registered businesses is not obvious when using the Assessor data we received. EDC needs data that pinpoints newly registered businesses by business commencement date. R. Betar will follow up with Chris Kelsey in the Assessor's Office for more clarity.

8. America 250 (C. Fuessenich)

- Second meeting of A250 group was held on March 15. The Litchfield Patriots are coordinating the A250 celebration with Alice Ridgway as lead.
- Organizations and groups are sharing ideas and events that will start in April 2025 and run through all of 2026.
- Plans include an online tool to help all groups collaborate and coordinate all efforts.
- EDC should be thinking about how they want to support events and perhaps sponsor and collaborate with other entities on our own events, too. Some ideas shared by EDC include:
 - i. Coordinating with restaurants to offer historic menus
 - ii. Research historic recipes and possible related events - M. Murelli will start researching.
 - iii. Supporting A250 efforts on [VisitLitchfieldCT](#)

9. Litchfield Historical Society (LHS) update:

- L. Turner met with Jennifer Graham, a new board member of LHS, about EDC's potential collaboration on a Litchfield Welcome Center at LHS.

10. New Business

- J.McLaughlin Clothing is opening a new store on the Green. Opening date is unknown.
- L. Turner is serving on the Green Usage Committee, a sub-committee of the Borough of Litchfield. Since no application exists for use of the Green, decision-making about which entities can hold events on the Green is unclear. Perhaps a new application will help establish criteria for how the Green can be used and by whom.

11. Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting made by Tom Roman; Lindsey Turner seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8.45 p.m.

Next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Renée Betar, Acting Secretary
Litchfield Economic Development Commission

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