



LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting Minutes · DRAFT

June 28, 2023
Bantam Annex
80 Doyle Road
Bantam, CT 06750

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

PRESENT *Regular members:* Tara-Marie Bares, Thomas Roman, Lindsey Turner,
L. Cleveland Fuessenich
Alternate members: Renee Betar
Members of the public: N/A
Ex-officio: Denise Raap, First Selectman, Litchfield

ABSENT *Regular members:* Michele Murelli
Alternate members: Missy Lafferty, Cailyn Paradise

- Appointment of alternate voting member(s) for meeting: R. Betar.
- Motion by T. Bares to approve draft minutes of the May 31, 2023 regular meeting with amendments; R. Betar seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- Third-Annual Top Dog Contest:
 - Record-breaking participation with 17 restaurants
 - Contest to take place July 14-17 with winner announced July 19 at summer concert (National Hot Dog Day)
 - T. Bares connected with Michael Lyn Cappello of Park & Rec to coordinate
 - L. Turner to get trophy from Jackie's (handed from one winner to the next)
 - T. Bares to update graphics to include logos of all final participants
 - Next steps:
 - Voting form (Stacey Raap)
 - Printed table tents with QR code (T. Bares)
 - Requests for photos of hot dogs from restaurants by July 10 (EDC)

- Send Park & Rec material for promotion in newsletter (T. Bares)
 - After the contest is over, encourage restaurants in Litchfield to incorporate VLCT QR code on their menus
- Marketing and branding Litchfield:
 - “Welcome to Litchfield” signage
 - T. Bares working with J. Graham on revisions to design proposal from May 2023 meeting, with plans to present on September 7, 2023 before the Design Review Advisory Committee meeting
 - In the interim, L. Graham will confer with R. Alexe re: proposed locations and gather more details regarding material and price estimates for physical sign
 - D. Raap to check whether three quotes are needed — or whether that isn’t necessary if cost for ARPA-related project is below \$20K
 - Welcome center
 - Currently on hold with Litchfield Historical Society until new director is onboard for at least 6 months
 - In the meantime, they would love to have the printed Litchfield guides in the museum and want “Made in Litchfield” items in the store
 - Visit Litchfield CT (guide) reprint
 - T. Bares formalized a “sponsorship form”
 - D. Raap will post on the Town of Litchfield digital channels
 - C. Paradise to present this opportunity to LABA
 - Potential sponsors to approach:
 - Litchfield Distillery — LT
 - Forman School — LT
 - ACE of Litchfield — LT
 - Market Place — LT
 - Litchfield Inn — LT
 - Union Savings — RB
 - Litchfield Bancorp — TML
 - TheKey — LT
 - J.McLaughlin — TML
 - Byrde + the b — LT
 - Changes to InDesign file:
 - J.McLaughlin (new)
 - Blueprint CT (closed)
 - Airbnb project — tackle this summer / fall (encourage hosts to include VLCT QR code to website + have printed booklets onsite)
 - Intended distribution for sponsored booklets: information booth, coffee shops, historical sites, Airbnbs, hotels, etc. (sponsors can choose how many of the booklets in selected print run they’d like to keep for their own use)

- For future print run, consider designing a map (intended to be more “decorative” than exhaustive, e.g. “shops and restaurants” labels as opposed to actual business names plus historic sites to be evergreen) to include as last spread of guide — perhaps via Carole Weaver or high school art students
- Tentpole events:
 - Q1 = Restaurant Week
 - Q2 = Top Dog Contest (plus LHRR, Makers’ Market)
 - Q3 = TBD* (plus Summer Concert Series)
 - Q4 = Holiday Stroll (Fall Fest? Shop Small Weekend?)

**Cultural community events? Sidewalk festival?*

- Other topics (as time allows):
 - “Made in Litchfield” basket raffle (Parks & Rec):
 - T. Bares met with Michael Lyn Cappello to discuss coordinated campaign for a “Made in Litchfield” raffle drawing (free to enter with name, city/state, email address with auto opt-in terms for email subscribership) leading up to, during, and announced at last concert of the summer series
 - Litchfield Farmers Alliance (“What’s Fresh in Litchfield”)
 - Naugatuck Valley Railroad:
 - T. Roman acquired survey from DOT
 - T. Roman confirmed the state owns the property
 - T. Roman submitted survey to railroad group
 - East Litchfield Village Improvement Society (ELVIS) recommended a historical commemoration in the form of a monument given that 889 men / troops were sent off to war from that site; D. Raap mentioned American Legion may be interested given the historical monument component
 - L. Turner brought up handicap accessibility but T. Roman mentioned the railroad’s “heritage” status may not require this (though we would of course want to be inclusive and consider this)
 - T. Roman has outlined and proposed a replacement site, proposed expansion site, and proposed location for monument
 - EDC to serve as conduit between Naugatuck Valley Railroad and local businesses in Litchfield to gauge interest and partnership for events and transportation logistics
 - T. Roman to capture interactions between Naugatuck Valley Railroad and towns like Torrington and Thomaston and Waterbury in order to present information to the BOS re: economic value
 - America250
 - Litchfield Patriots are hoping to be a facilitator for ideas — so it’s up to volunteers and other key players to continue to brainstorm and take action for events, etc.

- EDC to promote America250 via VLCT — publish a related events on the website calendar, compose a blog post, dedicated newsletter blast, social media posts, etc.
 - Fuessenich too mentioned Harvey Hubbell is interested in getting farms to begin growing heirloom fruits and vegetables that can be integrated into local menus at restaurants; plus, M. Murelli had previously mentioned the idea of a cookbook in this vein
- J. McLaughlin case study
 - T. Bares reached out to J. McLaughlin corporate welcoming them to our beautiful town and inquiring about whether they would share what informed their decision-making process to choose Litchfield for their storefront
 - The idea is to glean any relevant insights or data points (re: foot traffic, demographic data, business forecasting, etc.) that we can internalize as the entity promoting further economic development in town for existing and future businesses
- NWCT EDC + Chamber of Commerce
 - L. Turner attended their event earlier this month
 - NWCT EDC + Chamber of Commerce intends to get folks to participate and contribute to the building of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
 - Subsequent meetings take place: July 12, July 26, and September 7 (~4 hours each) at EdAdvance, 355 Goshen Road
 - Per Emily Hultquist, they are interested in getting more representation and feedback from young people and families
- Strategic plan working group
 - Endeavor to, as EDC, outline core mission, tentpole initiatives, budget, etc. for one-year, two-year, and three-year outlook
 - Could take the form of a special meeting, hours-long brainstorm offsite
- EDC nomination(s) / election of officers for 2023-2024
 - C. Fuessenich makes a motion to table nominations and elections of officers until July meeting given low attendance at June meeting
 - Exact time for July meeting TBD (might need to be a special meeting if we change the 5pm time as it was originally scheduled back in January); D. Raap to advise
- Adjourn: Motion to adjourn meeting made by T. Bares; L. Turner seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,
 Tara-Marie Lynch
 Litchfield Economic Development Commission