



MEETING AGENDA *Minutes*
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

January 31, 2024 at 7pm

Bantam Annex
80 Doyle Road, Bantam, CT 06750

1. Meeting called to order: 7:05
2. Attendance: Cleve Fussennich, Renee Betar, Tara-Marie Bares, Cailyn Paradise, Missy Lafferty, Present;
3. Doug Clement, Content Manager/Member of Public, present.... Tom Roman & Lindsay Turner , Shellane Dyer, Absent.
Appointed Renee B. as regular member.
4. Approve minutes of November 15, 2023 EDC meeting. Approved with edits:
T. Bares moved to accept minutes. R. Betar seconded. Approved
5. Schedule of regular meetings for 2024:
 - o January 31
 - o February 28
 - o March 27
 - o April 24
 - o May 29
 - o June 26
 - o July 31
 - o August 28
 - o September 25
 - o October 30
 - o November 20
 - o December 11
6. Public comment: Doug: surpassed 4000 on FB and Instagram. The organic response on FB shows significant growth: "FB is crushing it". "FB has anointed us", quotes from Doug. Several other indicators of organic growth as well.
Doug is on the Board of the CT Restaurant Assoc., and he is going to get the Association to promote our Restaurant Week.
7. Restaurant Week (March 22-29, 2024): Begin the publicity in mid-February. Restaurants in red need to be solicited / followed up.
 - o Participants so far; pending restaurants in red:
 - Market Place Tavern
 - Bohemian
 - @ the Corner

- ATC South Street
- Petraroia Deli
- Stonybrook Clubhouse Provisions
- The Village
- Wood's Pit BBQ & Mexican Cafe
- Mockingbird
- Materia Ristorante
- Saltwater Grille
- Dutch Epicure
- Meraki
- Krafted Brew Lab
- Litchfield Distillery
- Patty's
- Ripe Tomato
- DiCapo
- West Street
- Hometown Pizza/Bantam Pizza
- Zini's

○ Timeline of action items:

- ~~January 15 = Promotional design~~
- ~~January 19 = Teaser with "stay tuned for participating restaurants (social, web, email)"~~
- ~~January 19 = Post "2024 Restaurant Week" dates on VLCT events calendar~~
- ~~January 19 - February 2 = EDC outreach to restaurants (reference script)~~
- January 31 = EDC meeting
- February 10 = Deadline for restaurants to Yay or Nay (back-up deadline: March 1)
- February 28 = EDC meeting
- March 1 = Deadline for restaurants to submit their RW menu (baking in buffer here)
- March 8 = More teaser posts and coverage as menus trickle in
- March 8 = Press release / coordinate publicity
- March 8 = Get posters printed / hand out to restaurants**
- March 15 = Heavy promotion across social media, email, web (1 WEEK AWAY)

8. Video showcase series: Proposed Initiative

- "Litchfield Exchange"
- Launch May 2024
- All types of businesses and organizations, starting with the oldest (with one exception, to feature a "coming soon" business 1x/quarter)
- EDC interviewing *behind* camera, spotlighting business owners as they tour us through their establishment and answer 5-10 questions in < 2 minute clips: and leave room to highlight new businesses that open as well/ once a quarter we feature a biz gratis...
- A Rep from the EDC's unofficial finance committee should meet with the Finance Dept. and develop agreements related to e-commerce / self funding, and sponsorships for the Guide.

9. VLCT guides:

- R. Betar and L. Turner managing the distribution of copies from our most recent print run(s)
- T. Bares proposes changing the sponsorship structure: We do not make \$\$ on the 500 run for Guides. Change sponsorship 1250.00 and 1750.00. Michele M. moved, Tara-Marie B. seconded.

Unanimous.

T. Bares also proposed additional Digital Bonus Options:

a featured post w/# or a fully sponsored blog post;

\$150.00 for Logo in newsletter;

\$500 for a featured post; \$1500.00 for a full blog post.

T.Bares moves to approve additional digital bonus options; seconded Missy Lafferty.

- For reference, our costs:
 - 500 copies = \$1,142.00
 - 1,000 copies = \$1,645.00
- Currently:
 - 500 copies = \$1,142
 - 1,000 copies = \$1,645
- Proposed:
 - 500 sponsored copies with back-cover logo = \$1,250
 - 1,000 sponsored copies with back-cover logo copies = \$1,750
 - PLUS digital bonuses:
 - \$150 logo in VLCT email newsletter
 - \$500 featured posts (#sponsored) on Facebook and Instagram
 - \$1,500 sponsored blog post on VLCT website
- EDC to plan spring print sponsorships:
 - Litchfield Bancorp (T. Lynch)
 - Litchfield Inn
 - Forman School, (M. Lafferty)
 - Winvian
 - Realty companies, Cleve
 - Region 20, (M.Murelli)
 - Market Place Tavern, (C.Paradise)
 - *GOAL: Secure 1-2K more copies in time for Restaurant Week*
- S. Dyer and M. Lafferty to send database of rental accommodations before February meeting
- Substantive changes to content:
 - Spa / salon section
 - Business services — Oliver Wolcott Library, co-working spaces (YARDwork, The Offices at Ten Cobble Court), SCORE
 - Conference centers (Wisdom House)?
 - "Live in Litchfield" chapter; Consider changing it to 'Life in Litchfield'.
 - SEASONAL insert* Fall launch.
 - *GOAL: Launch first iteration of seasonal itinerary for Fall 2024*

10. Unofficial Finance subcommittee:

- R. Betar and M. Lafferty to research and compile key fundraising dates (e.g., grant opportunities, application deadlines, appeals to the Town / BOS for next fiscal budget, federal funding, etc.); T. Bares sent along historical budget lookback as well as opportunities via Rista Malanca.
- Renee put together a workbook of comps: Budgets \$\$ to town commissions. The EDC has become a significant entity, showing significant and consistent growth as a marketing firm for the Town. Moving forward, serious consideration has to be given to budgeting for staff for the EDC. As we move into e-Commerce, the level of social media marketing required to run a successful campaign requires expertise and time. It is beyond what can be asked of volunteers.

- S. Dyer volunteered to help manage and track expenses / balance sheet
 - Seherr-Thoss Foundation application: February 15
 - E-commerce infrastructure project
 - T. Bares to get agency pricing for web development / integration
 - M. Murelli to nail down details about logistics of e-commerce transacting as a municipal entity (including "earning" money to reinvest into EDC budget)
11. Old business, ongoing projects in process:
- Litchfield Businesses Database (Keetu Winter)
 - Litchfield signage
 - "Opening a Business in Litchfield" flowchart resource on website
12. Items for next meeting:
- Updates from NHCOC (R. Malanca) Weekly meetings (virtual) T. Bares, L. Turner, Denise Raap are attending.
 - Expanding tentpole events: EDC with Historical Society, Art Tripping, LAC, Park & Rec (M. Murelli)
 - Spring Plein Air Painting Event in the Meadow / Historic District
 - Summer Music and Art Salons in the Meadow
 - Summer "Busking Saturday Nights"
 - Early Fall Makers Market in the Meadow
 - Winter:
 - Christmas Market in the Meadow
 - Dickensian Christmas in the Main House
 - Initiative where the houses in Historic District deck out decorations
 - Draft mission statement (for approval):
The mission of Litchfield's Economic Development Commission is to enhance the economic well-being and long-term prosperity of the Town by serving as a resource for current and future businesses and organizations. We strive to promote responsible economic growth and hope to retain and attract business owners and families to the community who value the Town's history, unique quality of life, and collaborative vision for the future.
13. Roadmap strategy meetings:
~~December 13~~ (TO BE RESCHEDULED) — Roadmap, Task Force(s), Strategic Planning
14. Adjourned @ 8:15: M. Murelli moved to adjourn, T. Bares seconded.

Next regular meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 28 at 7pm at the Bantam Annex.

*Respectfully Submitted,
 Michele G. Murelli, Secretary*