



**Town of New Fairfield
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, Connecticut**



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Myke Fuhman, James Kloos, Greg Manning, Mark Werner, Michael Kiviat, Kathleen DiTullio (arrived at 7:34 pm)

Mr. Fuhman called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes – January 18, 2022 Regular Meeting

Mr. Fuhman moved to approve the January 18, 2022 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Kloos and passed unanimously.

Opening Public Comment & Participation

Jeff Morrell, 143 Shortwoods Road, thanked the EDC for considering other uses of Consolidated School rather than just demolishing it. He said he does not look forward to having the highest mill rate then other area towns but knocking down this building would be a slap in the face to residents.

Mr. Fuhman said the EDC is here to present alternatives and work with other departments to do so. He said he thought a community survey would be going out for people to express an opinion.

Correspondence & Announcements

Mr. Fuhman said there is a vacancy on the Commission and they will need to search for a replacement.

Beautification Project – Signs Update

Mr. Manning said he does not have an update on the sign project as they had been discussing but he is looking into putting up the smaller directional signs around Town. He said the next step is to get the costs of signs that are directional pointing to New Fairfield Business District, for example.

Mr. Fuhman noted there is money in this fiscal year's budget and some funds are allocated in next year's budget as well.

Mr. Kloos said he drives in and out of New Fairfield and sees all sorts of different signs and wondered who controlled them – the State, the Town? He thought there should be some uniformity.

Khristine Hall said the approach to New Fairfield is a State highway and Public Works has worked with the State on what can be put on the sign. Mr. Manning said they had spoken to Zoning and the City of Danbury about the signs and just needed to get some pricing.

New Fairfield Town Postcard/Town Sticker Update

Mr. Fuhman said the next step is get the postcards printed. Mr. Kiviat said he got a quote of \$150 for 250 residential postcards and 250 commercial postcards. He said he had to go to the internet to get pricing because the local printers were much higher. He also got pricing on the sticker which would be oval – 500 would be \$206 (with delivery); 1000 would be \$224; and 250 would be \$171. He said he could go back and get quotes on a circular sticker.

Mr. Kloos asked if he got a quote on a magnet which he thought they had originally discussed.

Mr. Fuhman asked if there was any event coming up to hand these out at prior to May 1st and Mr. Kloos said Sip & Stroll was upcoming.

Mr. Kiviat said when he looked at magnets he could not find an oval one but would look again. Mr. Fuhman asked Mr. Kiviat to price a whole gamut of sizes and magnets for the next meeting. Mr. Werner noted the Sip & Stroll registration allows for 350 people to participate so a variety of items might be good to hand out.

EDC Commission Participation in upcoming New Fairfield Events

Mr. Fuhman said they discussed Sip & Stroll and asked if there was anything else upcoming and Mr. Manning said he would reach out to Parks and Rec to see what they have on their calendar and how EDC can participate.

EDC Newsletter

Mr. Fuhman felt this really did not need to stay on the agenda as Mr. Kloos seemed to have a good format. Mr. Kloos said he wants to do this quarterly and wanted to work with someone else on it. Mr. Werner said he could help draft something with Mr. Kloos and said there is a new bake shop coming to Town. Mr. Manning said he spoke with the Newtown Economic Development Coordinator and her newsletter is very simple – has maybe one or two bullet points. He said a quarterly newsletter may be too stretched out and too long for anyone to really want to read.

ARPA Funding Update/Small Business Grants

b.) Sewer Study

Mr. Fuhman said the sewer study seems to be receiving a lot of negative responses as there is misinformation and conjecture on some people's parts. He was thinking that this study might benefit from a collaboration with other departments on a video project of the benefits of the sewer to businesses and the schools.

Ms. Hall liked the idea presented by Mr. Fuhman to do the videos for FaceBook and other channels to get the word out. She said the vote will be May or April.

Mr. Werner said there is a lot of misinformation about the sewer study. He said this is just a study to weigh the pros and cons. He said the business people would like to move here but there is no sewer or water so they have walked away.

Mr. Manning said he agreed with Mr. Werner and felt strongly the sewer would generate more business.

a.) Community Development Ideas

Mr. Fuhman said there is still work to do for the next meeting on community development ideas.

Consolidated School Discussion – Manning

Mr. Manning said the article in the Tribune suggested other alternatives then a bus lot should the Consolidated School building be demolished. He said a bus lot is not ideal in that location.

Ms. DiTullio arrived at 7:34 pm.

Ms. Hall said the community center idea had been looked into in place of demolishing Consolidated. She said the demolition of Consolidated was contemplated from the beginning saying the resolution from two years ago addressed it. She said there has been a lot of miscommunication about the bus lot as it is not mutually exclusive with putting a community center there. She said the issue is people don't know what they want in a community center. When the high school renovation is done the old gym will be open to the public and the pool will be open to the public. She said as part of the money for the sewer study, there is money for a study for the community center. There are estimates that a renovation of Consolidated could cost up to \$8 million. She said that would require bonding and the Town is not ready for more bonding. She said this is not an inexpensive proposition.

Mr. Manning said one option for the bus lot might be the lower multi purpose lot once the high school is torn down.

Ms. Hall said the high school will be torn down but there are problems with high traffic, the dog park and the playing fields that would make the bus lot less desirable.

Mr. Furhman said he was hoping the study could actually be done to guide New Fairfield for the long term.

Signage at High School - DiTullio

Ms. DiTullio said she had not done anything yet about the sign but would start working on the application.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations - DiTullio

Ms. DiTullio said the federal guideline is to put stations on interstate highways and not individual towns. Ms. Hall said she should talk to the State because they are encouraging these stations.

NEW BUSINESS

New and Prospective Businesses

Mr. Manning said when he spoke to the Newtown Economic Development Coordinator they send a postcard that the EDC is here to help. He said New Fairfield is much smaller and should be able to send a representative to the new business.

Ms. DiTullio said at the last Zoning meeting a new boutique was approved at Heritage Plaza.

Mr. Kloos said he sent a ribbon cutting ceremony template to the First Selectwoman's secretary.

Closing Public Comment

Mr. Morrell thanked the EDC again for bringing the Consolidated School up and looking at alternatives. He hoped a survey would go out for input. He said Ridgefield mothballed a couple of buildings a few years ago until they decided what to do with them.

Adjournment

Mr. Furhman moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 pm, seconded by Mr. Werner and passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by email on 03/24/2022 @ 12:56 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield