



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



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
Monday, December 18, 2023**

Present: Myke Furhman, Chair
Greg Manning
Kathleen DiTullio
Mark Werner
Jim Kloos
Michael Kiviat
Also Present: Melissa Lindsay, First Selectwoman
Thomas Perkins, Selectman

Mr. Furhman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Public Comment & Participation

There were none.

Approve Minutes of November 20, 2023

Mr. Werner moved to approve the minutes of November 20, 2023, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.

Aye: Furhman, Werner, DiTullio, Manning, Kloos, Kiviat

Correspondence & Announcements

Mr. Furhman reminded members to submit any expenses for the carol sing.

The budget presentation for the commission will be either January 18th or 23rd.

There is still an opening on the commission for a member.

NEW BUSINESS

2024 EDC Initiatives

Mr. Furhman said the Commission has had some successful events and some not so much. He said the home show is good for the mission of EDC to help local businesses. He felt the Commission should conduct another survey since the first one was several years ago - 2018.

Mr. Kloos said since the Commission was started they talked about attracting and retaining businesses. He said the goal is to make New Fairfield more attractive for businesses and residents. He felt the members should go around to the business owners and ask what their challenges are such as rent, parking, etc.

Mr. Furhman said the Commission could help with zoning, fire marshal's regulations, and health but not necessarily private issues such as rent or parking. He said retaining business is key and the commission should focus on the marketing to bring business to Town.

Mr. Manning said the logo designed and put on the sticker and the postcards were created to help market New Fairfield. He felt the branding initiative should continue and wondered what other events EDC can take advantage of.

Ms. DiTullio said she spoke to commercial realtors and they continue to give feedback that the Town has limited commercial zones and a lack of infrastructure in the center of town which is a hindrance.

Mr. Werner said the EDC should encourage grand openings and ribbon cuttings when new businesses open. He said the home show is a great opportunity for home based businesses or those who don't have a store front to provide a venue where people can meet tradespeople, for instance. He said there is limited infrastructure in town and the town should really consider that and how it could improve the value of the existing businesses which could move some of the tax burden off the residents. Ms. DiTullio said she was shocked by the grand list statistic Mr. Werner had mentioned at the last meeting. Mr. Werner said he would look back at the numbers to bring a more current statistic to the meeting.

Mr. Manning said the home show was a great initiative but whatever initiatives the group decides on the whole group must be involved in helping.

Mr. Furhman said the home show is fantastic for home based businesses. The carol sing this year lacked vendors and without vendors the event should be produced by Parks and Recreation. The pop up shop to provide a venue in a retail location for one or two vendors should be pursued. He also felt two big events was enough for the Commission to tackle – carol sing and home show, for instance. He felt the Commission should consider the pop up, a new survey and expanded marketing initiatives.

2024 Budget

Mr. Furhman said this is not a big presentation for EDC but they should perhaps hold a special meeting to discuss the initiatives proposed and how the budget should go together based on those initiatives.

OLD BUSINESS ARPA Funding Update/Small Business Grants

Mr. Furhman said there are three more pending applications to consider.

EDC Sponsored Activities

I. Holiday Carol Sing/Pop Up Shop

Mr. Manning said there are two sponsorships that need to be approved for acceptance by the Board of Selectmen – Dr. Chorney and Dr. Quimby for the program booklet and Mike Evans for

the jingle bell bracelet.

II. Spring Home Expo

Mr. Furhman said the Commission needs to start over on making this work and will need all hands on deck. Ms. DiTullio asked if a date had been set yet and Mr. Furhman said he thought they had discussed February. Ms. DiTullio said they should shoot for just one Sunday from noon until four or five. Mr. Furhman asked Ms. DiTullio to reach out to Company A to establish a date.

Mr. Perkins asked if there was a charge for vendors and Mr. Furhman said they did not charge New Fairfield businesses but felt there would be a booth fee for out of town businesses.

Mr. Manning said when we was reaching out to vendors for the fall show they asked for a flyer to be emailed so they could look at it so they should develop one for this year.

III. Business Owner Happy Hour

Mr. Furhman suggested they give this one more shot to try and make it successful. He said The Office will host and asked when the Commission would like to hold it. Ms. DiTullio suggested maybe the first week in February.

EDC Commission Participation in upcoming New Fairfield Events

Mr. Furhman suggested scaling back on participating in too many events. Ms. DiTullio said they should participate in Sip & Stroll for sure.

NEW BUSINESS

New Fairfield New Email Addresses – Newfairfieldct.gov

Mr. Furhman said he would send around the instructions as to how to set up this email.

New and Prospective Businesses

The new sushi place is getting ready to open.

Closing Public Comment

Mr. Perkins asked if the EDC could co-sponsor something with the Lions Club and Mr. Furhman felt it would depend on what that something might be. He also felt the Board of Selectmen could discuss how they felt EDC should be utilized.

Mr. Furhman reminded all of the Freedom of Information session to be held December 19th at 6 pm.

Adjournment

Mr. Furhman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm, seconded by Mr. Kloos and

passed unanimously.

Aye: Furhman, Werner, DiTullio, Manning, Kloos, Kiviat

Minutes recorded by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen R. Babb". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 12/20/2023 @ 13:37 p.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield