



Town of New Fairfield
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, Connecticut
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 21, 2024



Present: Myke Furhman
Greg Manning
Michael Kiviat
Kathleen DiTullio

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Correspondence and Announcements

Mr. Furhman reminded members that there is still at least one open seat on the Commission and no one has heard anything further about John Apple and whether he intends to take the seat he was appointed to fill.

Public Participation

Jennifer Pappas, a New Fairfield resident, said she spoke to Parks and Recreation about return on investment for the Beach House which they are planning on spending \$640,000 to repair.

Approval of Minutes from September meeting

*Mr. Manning moved to approve the September 16, 2024 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.
Aye: DiTullio, Manning, Furhman, Kiviat*

Old Business

2024 Initiatives

Marketing Initiatives/Newsletter

Mr. Furhman said Mr. Manning now had the information needed to log into Mailchimp to send out newsletters. Mr. Manning said he would like to move the mail system over to a town site if possible. Mr. Furhman said the Fire Marshal, when he spoke at the Happy Hour, did offer to share his email distribution list with EDC.

Mr. Furhman said he would like to introduce other marketing initiatives to bring customers to town and maybe a shop local campaign around the holidays. Ms. DiTullio reminded the Commissioners that she had put out 10 shop local signs last holiday season and 9 of them were

stolen. Mr. Furhman suggested a social media marketing campaign but instead of videos maybe do a montage of photos of different businesses that would want to participate. They could do an ad spend for a 20+ mile radius of New Fairfield rather inexpensively. Mr. Kiviat suggested changing the shop local to shop and eat local. Mr. Furhman even added get services locally to cover all the various opportunities.

Mr. Furhman said a newsletter request should be sent to any interested business to send a photo of their business and the EDC will run a series of digital ads as part of the EDC budget.

Holiday Carol Sing/Pop up

Mr. Furhman said the town's insurance requirements make it very prohibitive to do any type of pop up event on town property. They now require a certificate of insurance for \$1 million to name the Town as an additional insured. He said that is not viable for Etsy type shops or solo proprietors. He asked the members if they wanted to run the carol sing without the vendors. Mr. Kiviat asked if the money spent could be funneled into the marketing initiatives. Ms. DiTullio suggested a window decorating contest for the local businesses. Mr. Furhman said other towns have tried and have said people looked at the windows but did not necessarily stop in. Ms. DiTullio said it is an awareness campaign that could foster good will in the community. Mr. Furhman said he would rather take the money spent on the carol sing and buy gift cards or items from local stores and have people submit receipts as entry into the gift basket drawing. Ms. DiTullio said QR codes could be put in windows of those who choose to decorate and that could be an entry into the drawing. She said she would gauge the interest of some of the downtown shops before the next meeting.

Mr. Furhman moved to reallocate the money used for the Holiday Carol Sing to be put towards the Holiday marketing initiative and social media ad spend not to exceed \$1,000, seconded by Mr. Manning and passed unanimously.

Aye: DiTullio, Manning, Furhman, Kiviat

Business Owners Happy Hour

Mr. Furhman said the event did not have a strong attendance but there was a lot of feedback from participants. Ms. DiTullio said the Fire Marshal was a great speaker and relayed that Town officials want to help businesses. She said the owners of the new charcuterie were there. Mr. Manning said the turnout was disappointing but also felt the Fire Marshal was a hit. He wondered who they could get to speak at another happy hour perhaps in January. It was decided to have a happy hour/ribbon cutting at 12 Grapes and maybe get Evan White from Zoning to attend as the guest speaker.

Restaurant Day

Mr. Kiviat said he would like to do this close to President's Day weekend but certainly before Spring as the restaurant owners he spoke to said they don't need help in summer. He said he would float a date with the restaurant owners.

EDC Participation in upcoming New Fairfield events

Ms. DiTullio said the New Fairfield Days was well attended after being rain delayed, she handed out prizes for the kids and logo stickers to the adults. She also has the organic lollipops for the Halloween Trick or Treat event for this Friday.

Discussion of the Plan of Conservation and Development

Mr. Furhman asked if anyone attended the meeting and Ms. DiTullio said she had. The feedback was very positive about the POCD but the consultant from Planametrics said the plan cannot just sit on the shelf, it needs to be implemented.

New Business

New and Prospective Businesses

Mr. Furhman said the Fire Marshal said he would try to give EDC more attention when it comes to new businesses coming to Town. Ms. DiTullio said there is a new ReMax real estate office in the Heritage Plaza.

2025 EDC Meeting Dates

The proposed meeting dates are as follows: All meetings are held virtually at 7 pm on the third Monday, unless that is a holiday in which case it moves to the Tuesday following; Tuesday, January 21, 2025, Tuesday, February 18, 2025, Monday, March 17, 2025, Monday, April 21, 2025, Monday, May 19, 2025, Monday, June 16, 2025, Monday, July 21, 2025, Monday, August 18, 2025, Monday, September 15, 2025, Monday, October 20, 2025, Monday, November 17, 2025, Monday, December 15, 2025.

Mr. Furhman noted that December 15th is during Hannukah and requested the date be changed to December 16th.

Ms. DiTullio moved to accept the draft schedule as the final schedule with the change of December 15th to December 16th, seconded by Mr. Furhman and passed unanimously.

Aye: DiTullio, Manning, Furhman, Kiviat

Closing Public Comment

There was none.

Adjournment

Mr. Furhman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm, seconded by Ms. Ditullio and passed unanimously.

Aye: DiTullio, Manning, Furhman, Kiviat

Minutes recorded by:

Stephanie R. Barksdale

Recording Secretary

Received by email on 10/23/2024 @ 8:30 a.m.
by Chrystie M. Bontempo, Asst. Town Clerk, New Fairfield