



(Minutes are draft until approved at the following EDC meeting)

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

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
December 21, 2020**

Present: Myke Furhman, Chairman  
James Kloos  
Katherine DiTullio  
Mark Werner  
Mike Kiviat  
Greg Manning

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Furhman at 7:34 pm.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of Minutes – November 16<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting**

The meetings were not available at this meeting.

**4. Opening Public Comment & Participation**

There was no public present.

**5. Correspondence & Announcements**

Mr. Furhman announced that Stephanie Barksdale has been hired as Recording Secretary for the EDC and asked her to introduce herself.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**6. Beautification Project – Signs Update**

Mr. Manning said the subcommittee which includes Mr. Kloos and Mr. Kiviat met to discuss placement of signs for New Fairfield. He took a picture of the Welcome to Danbury sign to show what they have done. The thought would be to put up a sign saying Welcome to New Fairfield on the way into Town and Thank Your for Visiting on the other side as people leave Town. He said permission will be needed from State Engineers at the Thomaston DOT office.

Mr. Manning said the subcommittee thought it would be good to start with a welcome sign with thank you for visiting and to select up to three ideal spots to place them.

Mr. Kloos said a welcome sign already exists on Route 37.

Mr. Furhman asked if they were trying to create signs directing towards the business district or welcome signs at the border.

Mr. Manning said it was twofold, but there are different types of permissions needed according to the Superintendent of Public Works. He thought they could get some traction with the welcome signs and then discuss further signage.

Mr. Kloos suggested some areas for signs including Milltown Road, Fairfield Drive, or Havilland Hollow Road. He suggested 39 North near Squantz Pond.

Mr. Manning said there are some small state signs on Terra Mina, Squantz and Barnum. He said Milltown Road is heavily traveled into New York State. Havilland Hollow has an area where a stop sign is located but would not be ideal for the thanks for visiting side.

Ms. DiTullio agreed with Milltown Road and asked if there were car counts for the State roads. Mr. Manning said he could do some digging for car counts.

Mr. Werner asked if it might be easier to get a permit for Milltown and Mr. Manning said it is a state road and they would have to work with the engineers out of the district IV office. The signs would also have to have a breakaway feature should someone hit it with a car.

Mr. Furhman noted as you get closer to the center of Town there are four potential sites. He asked if the signs really needed to be on the borders of Town. He showed a sign New Milford has which directs people to the Historic Village Center. That sign is across from Big Y. He suggested "town centered" signs with more of a New England vibe. He thought these could be on Ball Pond and Gillotte Roads as welcoming and directional and simple but elegant.

Mr. Kiviat thought the signs could be more attractive maybe with the Town seal or a logo. He felt a sign area could be decorated for holidays or during seasons.

Mr. Kloos said the New Fairfield town seal is very involved. Ms. DiTullio said the seal represents the industries in New Fairfield through the years. She said there was a sign done by a beautification committee about 20 years ago. Mr. Manning agreed the seal looks a bit dated.

Mr. Kiviat felt a graphic designer might offer to revamp the seal or a new graphic either for free or at minimal cost.

Mr. Manning said the intent would not be to take away from the seal but to refresh the branding.

Mr. Furhman said the committee could make a recommendation to the Selectman's office that a new seal was needed. He also said Candlewood Lake is a big part of the Town's identity.

Ms. DiTullio said she had a contact of an art director of a national branding company.

Mr. Manning said he wanted to keep the momentum going on this sign project and was hoping to have the signs up by June. He also said the consensus of this commission was that change was needed. Mr. Furhman said he would alert the Selectman's office.

Mr. Manning said other suggestions this subcommittee came up with included adopt-a-street or area and interested groups could help out. Also the idea of actual naming the center of Town as the Town Center. He said the EDC could sponsor a clean up day.

Ms. DiTullio suggested that would be a good spring project and should be done in an April timeframe. Maybe even the weekend before Earth Day.

## **7. Local Business Promotion.- Video project**

Mr. Furhman said this would be a video project of local businesses. This could start early January. Mr. Furhman has the video production equipment and business owners would be interviewed about their business. Then the EDC

would spend \$50 - \$100 per video on Facebook. The ad campaign would focus on outside of Town since people in New Fairfield should know about these businesses. Members should reach out to businesses to get them to agree to do this video. Mr. Furhman would like to get the selectman's office involved.

Mr. Manning said the EDC should get a social media page, perhaps Instagram. Digital media and marketing is how people are finding things on social media.

Mr. Furhman said the ads will be on Facebook, Instagram and the Audience Network. Mr. Manning noted that Covid restricted all of the initiatives that they wanted to do in 2020.

Mr. Furhman said they should start with \$50 per video and Mr. Manning asked about the budget for EDC if they spend \$2,500 for the signs. Mr. Furhman felt there was over \$2,000 left in the budget after the signs.

Mr. Manning asked if the benches were on the back burner at this point. Ms. DiTullio said the benches could wait until the resources are available but it would be nice to have one or two on the sidewalk and maybe one in Town Center.

Mr. Furhman said these benches are sponsorable and signs could be placed on the benches. Ms. DiTullio noted the sign off exit 5 was sponsored by a law firm.

Mr. Furhman suggested a motion to create the videos using the method discussed during this meeting and to spend \$50 on social media advertising, one spot per week, and to spend up to \$2,600 for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Manning said he felt the \$2,600 was too much and felt they should see what kind of response they get first. Mr. Kloos asked if there was a way to measure the views and Mr. Furhman said Facebook does provide analytics in terms of how long people view the video and how many view it.

*Mr. Manning moved to create the local business promotion videos as discussed during this meeting and to spend \$50 on social media advertising, one spot per week, and to spend up to \$600 for one quarter of the year, seconded by Ms. DiTullio and passed unanimously.*

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

Mr. Furhman said if EDC members know business owners they should get him or Mr. Manning know.

## **8. Municipal Tax Relief / Incentives**

Mr. Werner said he heard the First Selectman speak about this and said the Town was not allowed to offer property tax relief. He said the idea was to look at helping smaller businesses to offer a tax abatement or tax relief. The cost to the Town would be taxes not collected. The State programs have allowed the Towns to delay taxes and were offered back in the Spring. He said the Board of Selectmen is taking the lead on this proposal.

Mr. Furhman said the EDC would table this topic for now.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **9. eCommerce Safe Exchange Parking**

Mr. Werner said he saw this in Ridgefield about a month ago when his wife had ordered something on line and had to meet the seller. The Ridgefield Police Department has special signage for e-commerce sellers and buyers for a meet up spot with visual surveillance to allow for safe exchange. He said the signs would cost \$28 and would be easy to install.

Ms. DiTullio suggested that this be brought to the First Selectman who is also the Police Chief.

Mr. Furhman suggested if the signs get installed that an article be put in the local paper. Mr. Furhman asked Mr. Werner to take this project on to get it going.

## **Other**

Mr. Werner noted that when the post office was remodeled the town name was taken off and only the zip code was left on the front of the building. He said he reached out to Sen. Chris Murphy's office and one of his aids will champion this with the U.S. Postal Service. He said while he was researching this permit for the renovation there was no record of it in the Town Hall. Ms. DiTullio said the Post Office is possibly exempt from local ordinances. Mr. Werner said every other post office has the name of the Town on the front of the building not just the zip code.

Ms. DiTullio asked if the Godfather issue had been resolved and Mr. Furhman said the check had been deposited and the wheels were moving on getting the money distributed.

Ms. DiTullio noted that Dr. Ken Huwer had retired after 40 years and asked if a resolution could be made thanking him for his years of service and commitment to the community. Mr. Furhman said he would reach out to the Selectman's Office about who should produce the resolution.

## **10. Closing Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **11. Adjournment**

*Mr. Furhman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm, seconded by Mr. Werner and passed unanimously.*

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

Minutes recorded by:



Recording Secretary

Received by Email on 12/23/2020 @ 10:56 am  
by Pamela J. Dohan, Town Clerk, New Fairfield