

LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

LITCHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

January 28, 2015

Litchfield Town Offices
West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759

Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. by David E. Dean, Chair.

Present- Regular Members: Renée Betar, Kay Carroll, Fred Colson, David Dean, Cleve Fuessenich, Sander Vandenberg; Alternate Member: Heather Boesch-Wages
Absent – Regular Member: Mitchell Fishman and Alternate Member: Doug Parker

Appt. of Secretary – Renée Betar

Appointment of alternates for the meeting: Heather Boesch-Wages for Mitchell Fishman

Motion to approve draft minutes of November, 2014, as amended – by K. Carroll, seconded by C. Fuessenich and approved

Correction: Under Main Items: second bullet, second sentence to read “Members agreed visits should occur after the New Year, likely beginning in February.

Public Comment - None

Main Items-

- Outreach to business community
 - Goal is to compile data that will take the town into the future. Information gathered will be helpful for future POCAD process.
 - List of businesses to visit has been divided among members. Note that the LABA list is not inclusive of all local businesses but is a good list with which to start this project.
 - Group agreed on list of questions to ask business owners. D. Dean will circulate list of questions. D. Dean advised to take good notes so data can be compiled and trends can be spotted.
 - H. Boesch-Wages will set up an email account on Google for EDC if any businesses or residents want to send follow-up questions and comments.
 - Ready to launch business outreach effort after February 2015 EDC meeting

Monthly Economic Updates per Region

- Bantam-News
 - Work at the Aerospace building ceased (for the winter?)

Mission Statement- (adopted 5/17/2011) *The Economic Development Commission will stay informed on economic conditions and monitor trends within the Town of Litchfield and make recommendations to appropriate officials and agencies. The commission shall also take action to improve said economic conditions and seek to coordinate with the activities of various related commissions and unofficial organizations to further Litchfield's economic development well being.*

- Work on the Breaval distillery continues.
- No news on the Dream House, which continues to be an eyesore and unsafe structure in the center of town
- Mockingbird Kitchen and Bar at the Bantam Inn is expected to open in February. The plan is to use the upstairs as an Inn for overnight guests.
- Switch Factory is almost fully rented and off the market. The model of this successful artists' collective could be studied and perhaps replicated in other local areas.
- Arethusa purchased coffee shop across the street from the creamery and Al Tavola. Plans are to open a restaurant that will serve breakfast and lunch and complement existing Arethusa businesses as well other businesses in Bantam.
- Impact of eventual loss of courthouse from Bantam was briefly discussed and should be on radar even though move is likely to be far into the future.
- Litchfield
 - Casa Bacchus opened for business in mid-December.
 - There was no news to report about the vacant space at 7 West Street.
- Commercial /business properties- changes:
 - The nature of Derwin's third business on the green in the vacated French Antique space remains undisclosed.
- Old Business
 - Bike Trail: Issues are resolved
 - Borough sidewalk project is complicated and plans are slow to develop.
 - No news on Stop'n Shop
 - Former jail: Russ Barton made a presentation to Litchfield Historic District Commission on January 22, 2015

.New Business

- Brochure produced by West Street Merchants, a sub-group of LABA, has been distributed in various locations in town.
- C. Fuessenich is talking with Litchfield Historical Society about reproducing a map similar to Salisbury map.
- Inspired by F, Colson's distribution of an article on non-profits contributions to a community, C. Fuessenich inventoried area non-profits, which total approximately 90-100 entries.
- Litchfield Hills Food Systems (LHFS)
 - K. Carroll announced Litchfield Hills Farm-Fresh Market's (LHF-FM) first fundraiser, a Mid-Winter Harvest Dinner on Feb. 28 at the Litchfield Community Center.
 - Farmers' Table is a new program of the LHFS
- D. Dean announced his resignation as Chair, EDC effective June 2015.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 25, 2015.

Motion to adjourn by K. Carroll, seconded by F. Colson. Adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Renée Betar, Acting Secretary
Economic Development Commission

David Dean, Chairman
Economic Development Commission