

## Litchfield Economic Development Commission

### DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

David Dean, EDC Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

#### **Present**

Regular members Renee Betar, Kay Carroll, David Dean, Mitchell Fishman and Cleve Fuessenich were present. Regular members Alexander VandenBerg and alternate member Doug Parker were absent. Guest John McKenna was present.

#### **Appointment of Alternates**

None

#### **Approval of Minutes**

M. Fishman made a motion to accept the May 2014 minutes as written, K. Carroll seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### **Public Comment**

None

#### **Main Items**

- **New EDC members**
  - Robert Graham of Bantam withdrew his interest for appointment as an Alternate or Regular EDC member due to excessive demands on his time.
  - Members discussed at least four residents under consideration as Regular and Alternate EDC members.
- **Fundamentals of Municipal Economic Development workshop:**
  - D. Dean attended the state workshop in Meriden presented by a CT consortium including CERC, CEDAS, CT Main Street Center and MetroHartford Alliance. David reported that the workshop was well-run. Familiar principles were presented and nothing new was revealed.

#### **Monthly Updates**

- **Bantam News**
  - Mockingbird Kitchen and Bar is scheduled to open in August 2014.
  - Limited progress is being made on the old TNT property on Route 202, which is being renovated to house Mark Garrison Salon and a second floor yoga studio.
- **Litchfield News**
  - Stop 'n Shop: Nothing new was reported.
  - Litchfield Jail property – C. Fuessenich spoke with Russ Barton (successful bidder), who is ready to close soon, pending the state's attention to this

- property.
  - Former Bantam Fuel and store is now re-opened as a convenience store by another party. Gas pumps are expected to be installed.
  - 569 Bantam Rd. (property opposite Wamogo) has been purchased by Hardscrabble LLC, who also owns Crystal Rock, for future use as a bourbon distillery with expected opening within approximately six months.
  - Interest has been expressed to convert the former Casa Bacchus store on the green to an art gallery.
- **Considerations of the impact of courthouse move on Litchfield and Bantam:**
  - EDC's goal is to start conversations with other town commissions and entities about eventual disposition and next use of courthouse buildings – both the courthouse on the green and the former Bantam School building.
    - D. Dean will invite Bantam P&Z member Mark Fitzgerald to the EDC July meeting to talk about the unique characteristics of the zoning of the Bantam School building.
    - K. Carroll and C. Fuessenich stated the courthouse is on the radar of the Litchfield Preservation Trust and since both sit on that board, they will keep EDC updated on any related developments.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- No news on the Thomaston Rd./E. Litchfield sewer plant.
- Discussion on empty storefronts in Litchfield:
  - Two smaller vacancies are being filled but the largest vacancy is challenging to fill. What can EDC do to help?

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- K. Carroll spoke with Jocelyn Ayer, Economic Development Coordinator for the NW Hills COG, who had applied for a farm grant. Ms. Ayers is a grant writer and 50% of her job is economic development for 21 towns, a benefit for region-wide efforts. K. Carroll will invite Jocelyn to the July EDC meeting.
- C. Fuessenich and Jonathan Wilson (Derwin's) explored updating a Litchfield map that includes advertising, which would be sold by the group (TBD) undertaking this project. The map could be available at the Information Booth on the green. No action was taken.
- A local Sotheby's realtor initiated a conversation with K. Carroll about not only selling a house in Litchfield but selling Litchfield, itself. EDC members discussed the impact of this conversation on EDC's role in the community.

#### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

The next EDC meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on July 30, 2014 at the Litchfield Town Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

K. Carroll made a motion to adjourn, C. Fuessenich seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renée Betar, Acting Secretary  
Economic Development Commission