

LITCHFIELD MAIN STREET INITIATIVE COMMITTEE

Organizational Meeting

Town Office Building, 74 West Street

May 8, 2017 – 7:30 p.m.

Call to Order: Leo Paul, Jr. called the organizational meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. As Ex-Officio member, Mr. Paul explained the initial meeting between Jonathan Wilson and him in January and gave Mr. Wilson credit for expanding the area to include the entire main street through Litchfield into Bantam. They put together an initial charge that he welcomed the committee to make adjustments to if they see fit.

Oath of Office Administered by Town Clerk: Lisa Losee, Town Clerk, swore in all members directly before the start of the meeting.

Introduction of Members and Positions: Mr. Paul had all members introduce themselves and note their roles in the community. He said the Board of Selectmen established the committee and appointed the eight members for a three-year term on May 2, 2017. Members and positions on the committee are as follows:

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Members</u>
2 BOS members	Jonathan Tarrant (R); Diane Knox (D)
2 Litchfield Borough Board Members	Jonathan Wilson (U); Gerard Perusse (D)
2 Town Citizens	Kathryn Zullo (D); Denise Raap (D)
1 EDC Member	L. Cleveland Fuessenich (R)
1 Bantam Borough Member	Richard Sheldon (R)

Mr. Paul then asked for nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary.

Motion: C. Fuessenich moved to nominate Jonathan Wilson as Chairman. J. Tarrant seconded the motion.

Motion: J. Tarrant moved and D. Knox seconded to close nominations. All voted aye and the motion carried. Voting on the nomination of Jonathan Wilson as Chairman, all voted aye and the motion carried. Mr. Paul said Mr. Wilson was instrumental in initiating this committee and will serve it well.

Motion: J. Tarrant moved to nominate Kathryn Zullo as Vice Chairman and D. Knox seconded. **Motion:** J. Tarrant moved and D. Knox seconded to close nominations. All voted aye and the motion carried. Upon voting on Kathryn Zullo as Vice Chairman, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Motion: C. Fuessenich moved to nominate Denise Raap as Secretary and J. Tarrant seconded. **Motion:** J. Tarrant moved and D. Knox seconded that nominations be closed. All voted aye and the motion passed. Upon voting on Denise Raap as Secretary, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Adopt Meeting Schedule: J. Tarrant suggested meeting at least once a month. The first Wednesday of the month worked for everyone, so the meeting schedule will be set accordingly at 7:00 p.m. in the First Selectmen’s office. Everyone agreed email is the best way to communicate.

Charge: Mr. Wilson asked the group to read over the charge.

Initial Discussion: J. Wilson said he does not like to serve on committees that just talk; he would like to have actionable items with physical results. He discussed his accomplishments in getting the businesses to work together on the green in Litchfield center and contacted all the businesses along Route 202 to see what their concerns were. Instead of starting a merchant's association, he started it as a sub-group of LABA. They created a brochure with map featuring places to eat, shop, play and stay. They have since dropped the merchant's association, as it has successfully merged with LABA. The businesses are also now unified across Litchfield. He thought the committee should look at an area wider than just the Green area. He thought we need a master plan for Litchfield and they should rally around the 300th Anniversary of Litchfield and work with the committee. He discussed the importance of having people, money and a plan to get things done. Mr. Paul thought the Town might be able to have a line item in the budget to accept donations to the Committee. He also asked them to come to the Town if they need to request more funds. J. Tarrant expressed ideas for the Green to enhance the concert experience. J. Wilson said a master plan would coordinate all aspects of buildings and surrounding grounds projects to form an overall pleasing streetscape. C. Fuessenich suggested burying the wires on the jail side of the green. Music was also suggested to be playing around the Green area. They talked about the information booth and how the merchants on the street are the best marketers. Social media can be very helpful, too. The Town's website is municipally-oriented, so maybe something like CivicLift platform might be more inclusive. Cleve said the cost requires cooperation between towns. K. Zullo said the museums are all free admission this year because of a sponsorship. She noted expansion of green space this year in back of the Tapping Reeve House with area for programs, gardens, orchard and stone walls. J. Wilson asked about plantings along the main road. C. Fuessenich suggested planting trees in the order states were adopted into the Union, as a follow-up to the Garden Club's planting of 13 trees for the original colonies. J. Wilson said the consensus on the Green was that foot traffic was declining. K. Zullo will check on the numbers of visitors at the Historical Society to see if foot traffic is on the decline. D. Raap said that tourism has declined since Connecticut has stopped supporting it. G. Perusse said summer traffic seems greater, perhaps because of the congestion in Fairfield County. Good lodging was noted as a draw for visitors. B&B's are allowed but not able to be profitable with current regulations. Mr. Paul said we need to work with P&Z on making it easier for businesses to thrive. He said he would speak to Russ Barton about whether a coffee shop is planned for the old jail. Bike rentals were suggested somewhere in town.

J. Wilson said each meeting should have a different person invited to speak, and meetings will be limited to one hour. The next meeting will be June 7th. Mr. Paul will invite Russ Barton to speak at the next meeting. Evan Dobos of CivicLift, Dave Brenner of Bantam Market, Cliff Cooper of the Greenway, legislators and others were also suggested as future speakers.

J. Wilson then discussed how the agenda should be presented for future meetings, with L. Paul's advice. He offered Mr. Wilson Ann Comb's help with the committee's minutes.

Adjournment: Motion: J. Tarrant moved to adjourn at 9:01 p.m. and D. Knox seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Denise Raap, Secretary