

1. Call to Order

The Chester Economic Development Commission held a Special Meeting on Monday, August 17, 2015, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Wright called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM.

2. Roll Call

In attendance and seated were Susan Wright, Pat Bandzes, Felise Cressman and Michael Sanders. Erin Bogan from RiverCOG was also present.

3. Audience of Citizens

Erin Bogan from The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG)

Erin Bogan introduced herself from RiverCOG. She noted RiverCOG used to be CRERPA which had been located in Old Saybrook. RiverCOG is located in Essex. They have merged with the northern region which includes Middlesex County, Lyme and Old Lyme. Erin explained they are doing an Economic Growth Strategy for the region with a grant from CT OPM. They have been working on a GIS database for the entire region since 2013 for all 17 towns which will feed into the Economic Growth Strategy. A consultant is being hired (Kevin Hively) to do the work for them. This will be a bird's eye view perspective. There will be a lot of focus on infrastructure and transportation. How do we capitalize on what we have? How do we work with infrastructure we don't currently have? How do we work around not having sewers, etc.? Information will be solicited from the public, businesses, demographic groups, etc. There will be public workshops. They are hoping to identify home based businesses. There is a committee meeting this week. They will also be holding public workshops. There was discussion regarding the proposed signage (and locations) that will be used to promote the workshops and strategy. Also, venues for getting the word out including social media, vacant stores, transit buses, etc. Erin noted the target is more residents than tourists. The first forum will be September 22<sup>nd</sup>, not sure about location yet. There was much discussion on where workshops/forums could be held. Members thanked Erin for coming.

4. Discussion of 2015 Program Initiatives

- Bridge Construction Updates (notes from First Selectman Meehan):  
Laurel Hill Cemetery to School Street  
Main Street Bridge Project  
Main Street East Project is on schedule. The BOS has approved

Quality Associates to complete section from School Lane to Middlesex Avenue. This work will be done in September. Contractor will reclaim and pave from Laurel Hill Cemetery to Middlesex Avenue all at once. Next stage of utility work for bridge coming up. Utilities will coordinate their schedule. There has been a lot of good communication from Town Hall regarding utility work, etc.

Merchants Meeting on June 15, 2015

Chairman Wright noted the Commission needs to look at the goals (posted on the website) and decide if they are still current. Also, what is the status of the Chester Business Listing Program. Decisions don't need to be made tonight but she would like to come up with strategies for Economic Development that are current and up to date as to what is being done. Regarding the Chester Business Listing Program, she didn't feel anyone was using it. Felise thought people were using the map rather than the business listing. It also hasn't been updated.

The EDC Strategies for Economic Development listed on the website were reviewed. It was agreed "Foster communication among Chester businesses..." was okay. Also, "Reach out to commercial property developers..." was okay. The second one "Retain Chester businesses by complementing their promotional efforts..." needs some additional thought. The third one "Attract businesses that would benefit Chester..." should be rewritten. It was felt EDC should identify what businesses Chester needs. It was also noted the permitting process for new businesses is too lengthy.

Mike Sanders noted in previous years there was a quarterly meeting of all board and commission chairmen to get an update on what's going on in Town. Quarterly meetings should one of EDC's goals. It was also suggested EDC's from Deep River and Essex be invited to a Chester EDC meeting to see what's happening in other towns. Maybe the October meeting would be good.

- Chester Wayfinding Signage Update

Chairman Wright noted the sign is almost done. She will get a date for installation.

Chairman Wright asked if EDC members should talk amongst itself about how it feels regarding the new Library and Aaron Manor hooking up to the town's sewer system. Should EDC have an opinion on these matters? She also noted there have been a lot of changes over the

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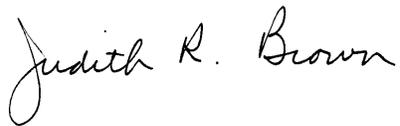
years. The Town Hall building is underutilized. Should it be something different?

New Business - none.

5. Approval of Minutes - May 11, 2015  
Approval of May 11, 2015 Minutes were tabled.

6. Adjournment  
There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Brown". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary