

**Town of Barkhamsted**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 18, 2016**

**Meeting called to order at 7:43 PM**

**Attending members:** Ross Herzog, Ginny Apple, Bob Pulford, and Bill Bowles. Also present was Don Stein, First Selectman.

**Review of minutes:** On a motion made by Ginny Apple, seconded by Bob Pulford, and passed unanimously, the minutes of January 21, 2016 were approved.

**Discussion:** Ross Herzog reported on the Economic Development Summit 2016 sponsored by the Northwest Hills Council of Governments on February 9. There were over 100 people at this meeting and they were divided into groups of 10 who met with federal and state agencies on a rotating basis. These agencies, who are chartered to support small businesses, were looking for opportunities to invest. One of the actions is that we should gather a file on these agencies and make them available to businesses that are looking for assistance.

The other item that came out of the Summit was the NWCONNECT initiative which is being pursued in the far northwest corner of the state, where many of the residents are part-time and depend on the internet and cellphones to work from home. Connectivity to these services is very sketchy in towns like Salisbury and Kent, and this initiative is based on technology improvements and the towns setting up the equivalent of a town public utility for internet and cell service. It's very early in its development and may not be applicable to Barkhamsted.

The Commission continued its discussion of business outreach, the marketing of available empty buildings or land to find businesses and tactics that could be used to help the current businesses or to attract new businesses. This discussion included:

- Business outreach
  - Meetings with business owners to determine how the Town can help
  - What are the reasons they are here and what are their expectations
- Prior actions included a standard set of questions to use in polling the local businesses. These will be reviewed at the next meeting (Kevin N./Bob P. took this action)
- Don Stein provided a list of businesses and will mark it up to come up with between 10 and 20 businesses to be contacted
- Marketing of property in Town
  - CERC (Connecticut Economic Resource Center), who maintains a "Sitefinder" website
  - Reach out to realtors to make sure they are aware of empty properties

- The Commission also felt that a welcome packet of information should be developed
- Tactics discussed included:
  - Riverton – Hitchcock factory, Old Riverton Inn
  - Farmington River corridor – fishermen
  - Route 44 – manufacturing
  - Rebranding like Roscoe, NY (“Trout Town USA”), or attract an outdoor business like LL Bean or REI, or find a boutique hotel chain who will focus on our outdoor attributes

This discussion will continue to be on the agenda at the next meetings to try to develop a comprehensive strategy for attracting more businesses into town that fit our environment and attributes.

Other items:

- Community calendar – Don Stein has the action to reach out to the other groups to get the community calendar started.
- Brochure/walking map – Don Stein has the action to reach out to New Hartford to see if we can share this item
- Ginny reminded the members that the Earth Day festival will be April 24<sup>th</sup> and a more detailed discussion and plan will be presented at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Stein  
First Selectman