

Town of Barkhamsted
Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2016

Meeting called to order at 7:40 PM

Attending members: Ross Herzog, Ginny Apple, Bob Pulford, and Kevin Noblet. Bob Geiger joined the meeting at 8:30. Also present was Don Stein, First Selectman.

Review of minutes: On a motion made by Bob Pulford, seconded by Kevin Noblet, and passed unanimously, the minutes of December 17, 2015 were approved.

Public Comment: Deb Simon presented information to the Commission regarding her views on the viability and impact to the environment of improving the trail through the MDC Greenwoods property. She has presented this information to all of the Town's boards and commissions and feels that there are endangered turtles and a variety of wildlife who would be significantly harmed by additional traffic and modifications to the existing trail. There was a great deal of discussion on this issue, but any action was tabled until there was a firm proposal by Barkhamsted and New Hartford on this subject. Don Stein also told the Commission that there may be State funds through a grant to pay for the proposed wildlife census and feasibility study for this area and the existing trail.

Discussion: After briefly reviewing the various agenda items, the Commission focused on 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
 - Need to develop a standard set of questions to basically poll the local businesses (Kevin N./Bob P. took this action)
 - Meetings with business owners to determine how the Town can help
 - What are the reasons they are here and what are their expectations
- 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
- Don Stein will provide a list of businesses
- 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 at the next meeting to try to develop a more comprehensive strategy for attracting more businesses into town that fit our environment and attributes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Stein
First Selectman