

# The Town of Brooklyn Economic Development Commission

Chairperson, Robert Simons

(860)774-6544

*Meeting the First Tuesday of every month @ 4pm at the  
Clifford B Green Memorial Center*

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016**

**Members present:** Marybeth Leonard, Cary Garcia, Robert Simons, Andrew Pinto, Chris Landis and Ronald Ventura.

- 1.) Call to order - Robert Simons, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm
- 2.) Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Leonard made a motion to accept the regular meeting minutes of September 6, 2016 as presented. Motion seconded by Andy Pinto. Motion passes unanimously.
- 3.) Public Commentary: AJ Kerouac brought up the topic of the NECOG Rt. 169 presentation that occurred last year. This is a regional effort to support businesses along Rt. 169 through various communities. Mr. Kerouac feels that there has not been enough of a chance to get input from Brooklyn town officials and that the recommendations made will be put in force which may later work against us. We should review this process with Brooklyn Selectman to see how they feel about this effort.
- 4.) Unfinished Business
  - a.) Brooklyn Business Association –
    - A meeting was held on September 20<sup>th</sup>.
      - i. The Car Cruise was the main topic, which was held the same weekend as the Brooklyn Fall Festival. Over 100 cars took part in the event.
      - ii. BBA President Carla Demers attended a Chamber event involving other local business associations. Overall, Brooklyn is doing well given its young age but needs more active members to continue moving forward.
      - iii. There will be a Lunchbox Learning event held at Hank's and hosted by Jim Zahanski of Weiss & Hale. The topic will be retirement funds. Date: TBD.
      - iv. The next Fun After 5 will be hosted by Creamery Brook Bison Farm on Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm.
      - v. The BBA is also looking into the process of becoming a 501(c)3.
  - b.) Business Recognition
    - Mrs. Leonard has contacted 3 businesses and scheduled plaque presentations for Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>
      - i. Brooklyn Pizza @ 10 a.m.
      - ii. Danielson Glass @ 10:20 a.m.
      - iii. Nationwide Insurance @ 10:50 a.m.

- Mrs. Leonard is looking for someone to photograph the groups on the 17<sup>th</sup> and send the ads to the Turnpike Buyer. Mrs. Garcia stated that although, she cannot attend the presentations, she is willing to put together the ad and send to the Turnpike Buyer.
- Mrs. Garcia informed Mrs. Leonard of another new business. Inspire Marketing, owned by Amanda Simoneau, opened earlier this year. Mrs. Leonard will contact Mrs. Simoneau to set up a time for a plaque presentation.
- A longevity award was discussed for Brooklyn businesses that have stood the test of time.
- Mrs. Leonard is also working on a list of businesses that have already been recognized.

#### c.) Brooklyn Fall Festival

- Mrs. Leonard reported that the festival was a success. There were 30 artists/vendors and she has already received feedback including the need for a greater internet presence.
- Mr. Pinto estimates there were 1500 to 2000 people in attendance which he feels was a good turnout given the events happening simultaneously in surrounding towns.
- The churches were open for tours. Smokey Bear was a big hit with the children, and the beautiful weather made it a wonderful event.
- Mrs. Leonard reported a \$200 profit from the event which will be turned over to the town.

#### d.) Old Business

- Mr. Landis revisited a POCD discussion from a previous meeting, asking if revisions were currently being made. During the discussion Mr. Landis realized he had the most recent POCD with him and concluded that it was published in 2011 and is valid until 2021. No revisions are required at this time. Mr. Landis did make the recommendation that when the revisions are due that the EDC have a representative on the subcommittee. He and Lyn LaCharite participated in the subcommittee for the 2011 POCD.
- Mr. Simons reported on the minutes from the last Planning & Zoning meeting.
- “Doing Business in Brooklyn” discussion continued regarding the goals of the Commission. The Commission is limited in moving forward without having an Economic Development Coordinator position. Mr. Ives previously informed the Commission that Jana Roberson, Director of Community Development, is currently working on other projects and it is unlikely that she will be able to assist the Commission in the near future. Mrs. Garcia has volunteered her time to record the monthly minutes and will also be updating the EDC page of the Town website. Mr. Pinto feels it is unfair that she is not being compensated for her time. Mrs. Garcia stated that she is willing to continue volunteering her time to determine the actual burden to provide these services. It was also discussed that, if she were to be hired as an outside contractor, she would have to resign from the Commission as it would pose a conflict of interest. The Commission agreed that it was essential to have a Commissioner do these tasks. Mrs. Garcia hopes that when the budget does allow for a coordinator that she may be able to fill that role and be compensated for her time. Mr. Landis, an EDC member for 10 years, discussed

the fact that EDC has requested a coordinator position numerous times with no success. A job description was written and presented at one time, which he will look for to provide a basis for any new proposal. The Commission is committed to pursuing this position to help Brooklyn be more inviting to businesses.

- Mrs. Garcia discussed some of her findings when she researched the Killingly EDC web page for ideas. Some information was similar to Brooklyn's in that the EDC meeting times and commission members were listed. Mrs. Garcia felt the following items were particularly helpful and items that could be useful for Brooklyn business owners, both current and potential.
  - i. A business guide for entrepreneurs providing guidance for individuals seeking to open their own business.
  - ii. Restaurant retail and shopping guide
  - iii. Ribbon cuttings by year
  - iv. Opportunities in Killingly – this page includes a link to the Killingly Business Association, the Step Up Program – small employer incentives for hiring, and the Eastern CT Enterprise Corridor Community (Thompson, Putnam, Killingly, Plainfield, Sterling, Sprague, Lisbon, and Griswold). Mrs. Garcia asked why Brooklyn was not included in this group. She felt that it could yield opportunities.

#### 5.) New Business

- a) Mr. Simons informed the group that he will be remaining in his Chair position with Mr. Pinto remaining as Vice Chair. A motion to accept this change was made by Mrs. Leonard. Mr. Landis seconded the motion. All in favor.

6.) Adjournment - Motion to adjourn at 5:20 pm by Chris Landis. Second by MaryBeth Leonard. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cary Garcia, Secretary