

Economic Development Commission
Draft minutes, September 8, 2016, Town Hall

Present: Elizabeth Borden, Stephen Melville, West Lowe, Susan Dyer, Pete Anderson, Sally Vaun, Joel Howard, Mary Fanette, Larry Hannifin, Vee Kausel, Kathy Williams, Ruth Melville, Marie Lowe, Bob Gilchrist, Sue Frisch
Guest: Michael Goman of Goman+York

The meeting came to order at 5:58 p.m. Pete Anderson moved and Mary Fanette seconded to approve the minutes of the last meeting as circulated. The minutes were approved.

Town web site: Mary Fanette reported that the website will probably take a couple more months to complete enough to be turned over to the selectman's office.

Downtown: Planning & Zoning has given final approval to the plans for the new convenience store. Pete Anderson stated that the Norfolk Foundation's big picture of downtown stretches from the City Meadow through Station Place to the Village Green, Town Hall and perhaps even the Battell Stoeckel Estate. The state is considering Sue Dyer's request for an extension for its grant to the City Meadow project.

Parking study: The town has allocated money to make 8 to 10 parking spaces behind Town Hall; there are very few spaces to create parking without spending a lot of money. Sue Dyer will form a parking study group, and its report should be done by the end of the year. Mike Goman handed out a rough sketch of some possibilities done by a Goman + York staff member and offered to make that person available to work with the study group.

Route 44 traffic: All agreed that it should be slowed down and Mike Goman offered to make an initial approach to the state DOT to discuss ways and means. The focus would be getting DOT's door open.

Initial G+Y interviews: Mike Goman said they would make a full report on the interviews G+Y made when it first started working with the EDC.

Additional G+Y services: Mike Goman suggested that, in the four months left in its contract, they do two things.

First would be conducting visioning sessions for the EDC...two meetings to gather public input and compile 4 to 5 things that residents think would be helpful to support economic development, and a meeting to present a report that would clarify those things and list needs, goals, tasks to accomplish them and individuals or organizations to carry those out. The EDC would then take on the followup.

Second would be to hold a meeting to explain tax incremental financing to interested groups and individuals. (There will be a meeting in North Canaan September 15 at 6 p.m. in its town hall.)

Winter Festival: Libby Borden suggested holding a winter festival put together and run by the downtown business community. A discussion of ways and means followed, in which several people commented that the street lights should be brighter.

Community Association: Joel Howard said the CA has brightened up the memorial on the green and refurbished the lights at the rail trestle. It hopes to redo the pathway across the green in oil and stone and wants to add two benches. The association also has been discussing ideas for weekly activities on the green and all present agreed that is a good idea.

Weekend in Norfolk: Ruth Melville reported that WIN was well received and the only complaint was about the traffic on Route 44. Results from a formal survey of attendees will be available soon.

Rails to Trails: Bob Gilchrist said R2T has put together a brochure, a website (norfolktrail.org) and a video (on the website) explaining what they are doing. They had a booth at WIN and plan to have one at the car show and the farmers market. They are looking for grants, including one from the state that requires 20% funding from the grantee. A trail work day is coming up in early October.

Car show: Marie Lowe said the car show is building momentum and is aiming at making \$10,000 to help fund a fitness center at the ambulance barn. She has had a very positive response from businesses.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Frisch