



TOWN OF NORFOLK
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
September 14, 2023, 5:00pm
MINUTES
By Zoom

Present: Libby Borden, Sue Frisch, Kate Johnson, Christal Preszler, Brett Robbins, Michael Selleck
Absent: Trish Deans, Larry Hannafin, Marie Lowe, Tom McGowan, Jon Riedeman, Robert Whipple
Guest: Ruth Melville, Lauren Valentino

Libby Borden called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

The minutes of the August 10, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

The EDC has tentatively chosen October 17th as the evening for our next business meeting.

The EDC will discuss the CT Cultural Districts at its next meeting.

Kate reported that construction for the Haystack Woods houses may begin this fall. She said that FNL and FN are awaiting word from HTTC to see if they have received a grant for renovating the second floor of the Royal Arcanum.

Friday Nights on the Village Green and Robertson Plaza activities were very successful despite the weather and planning has already started for the 2024 season.

Sue reported on the town website; a full report is attached. Highlights include significantly increased use of the website, a new page dedicated to Botelle School, and a new YouTube channel.

Lauren, who will be a regular visitor at the EDC meeting, said that Botelle's theme for this school year will be "Celebrating All and Creating Community" and Botelle plans to reach out to the town in myriad ways throughout the year.

Brett said that there was no new news with fiber optics.

Robert reported via e-mail that Yale is already starting to plan for 2024 and that the construction project is almost complete.

Sue said that WIN Winter Weekend is on schedule and that WIN Summer Weekend has plans to make Robertson Plaza a focus.

Marie reported via text that the unveiling of The Owl of Good Fortune on Robertson Plaza on September 2nd was a great success. The railroad gate is updated and painted. The Community Association will renew the plants under the Welcome to Norfolk signs and is preparing for the upcoming lighting of the trees on Memorial Green.

There is very little progress with traffic calming. The EDC will consider what kinds of signs to buy to encourage motorists to slow down.

The real estate market continues to be slow.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45.

Michael and Libby

Website report to EDC, September 14, 2023

1. More people are using the website. In the 2 years we've been tracking statistics and working on the website, the number of users per month has gone up 88%, from 2,746 in August 2021 to 3,277 in August 2023. Page views have gone up 67% in that same time span. During that time we reformatted and updated the site and are working hard to keep it refreshed with current news and images.

Our most recent addition is a page dedicated to Botelle School. Right now, it's a list of useful links to help people find school information quickly. There is also one news item, and eventually we hope to get more... or even someone to do a monthly update on what's going on at the school.

2. More people are subscribing to and looking at the newsletter, especially since early November 2022, almost a year ago, after the oil spill when we put out a couple of special editions and started including news items along with the events. In July this year we introduced a new format that uses the current website homepage hero image as the header every month, and are now starting to use photographs if we have something that adds to a news item.

Specifically, website newsletter subscribers have risen from 255 subscribers in October 2021 (when Kathryn started) to 435 as of September 8, 2023....a few days ago.

3. Taken together, we think the newsletter is to a large degree responsible for the rise in website usage. This rise is important, partly because it means that Town Hall is better able to communicate with residents and a better informed community makes better choices. And partly because getting news about community events and issues circulated better, makes for a more united, stronger town.

4. To help build website and newsletter readership, we are working on a publicity campaign, which will start with a color flyer to be inserted in Norfolk Now and used as posters and handouts around town. The cost for flyers and insertion is about \$500 and we're estimating about \$300 in other costs like design, etc.

5. And we now have a Norfolk, Connecticut, YouTube channel. It was created mainly to hold meeting videos because the Robin Hood Radio/CATV channel isn't being updated any longer. In addition to the website committee, we...the EDC...should think about ways it could be used to further the town's objectives and help businesses.

Comments and suggestions on all of this are welcome, but especially on the YT channel. I am learning as I go but would love to have knowledgeable help!

Links:

<https://norfolkct.org/botelle-elementary-school>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaxPY-VgS7imJ1-sc_7R3vA