

Town of Newington, NH
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 6th, 2020 Town Hall Under the Tent

Present: Chair Jeff Hiatt, Bob Raymond, Jill Boynton, Alicia Busconi, Selectmen Chair Ted Connors, Selectman Ken Latchaw, EDC Consultant Jerry Coogan, Police Captain Mike Sullivan, Residents; Denis Hebert and Chris Cross and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

J. Hiatt called the meeting to order.

Minutes Approval: T. Connors moved to approve the minutes of June 25th, 2020. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

Business Contact List Update:

The committee looked over the business contact list that was distributed to members. J. Coogan commented that the list was a work in progress, and it is not completely done. E. Boy reminded committee members that the list is confidential and should not be shared. Businesses gave this information with the understanding that it would not be distributed.

Mixed Use-Study-follow up activities:

K. Latchaw mentioned that the Mixed-Use study was on the website on the Planning Department page. T. Connors commented that the Board of Selectmen is still trying to reach out to the owners of the Fox Run Mall, Morgan Stanley, to set up a meeting to discuss the future plans. J. Hiatt said he has some connections at Morgan Stanley and he will reach out to them to get a response. K. Latchaw asked about the redevelopment of the "Sears wing" of the mall. T. Connors and J. Coogan met with Tony, the manager of the mall, eighteen months ago about the redevelopment. There has been no new information.

Retail Update-Alicia Busconi:

Retail is still turbulent. Several stores have filed for bankruptcy including JC Penney and GNC. In the next couple of weeks many of the stores will figure out if they are going to continue or close. Retail sales are down 25% compared to this time last year. Many store owners are worried about the 4th quarter because it is usually the busiest time of the year and if NH gets a second wave of Covid-19 in the fall it could really effect 4th quarter sales. Many office tenants have indicated that they are planning on downsizing.

Development Update-Jerry Coogan:

- The Subaru dealership is under construction
- A mixed use development for Newington Place is being proposed
- Wilcox is trying to figure out the best, most efficient way to expand whether it's wholly or partly on their land. They're hopeful that they'll have a plan in the next few months.
- Ken Linesman has no plans for his land yet. He's open to ideas which could include working with Wilcox.
- Little Bay Lobster Company is proposing an expansion to hold live lobsters.
- The Medical Office building on Shattuck Way is going to have its second public hearing on Monday August 10th. They are looking for a conditional approval from the Planning Board.
- Northeast Credit Union project is on hold until the fall of 2021.
- The proposed hotel to be located at 141 Shattuck Way is working through their conditions of approval.

At the last EDC meeting, Mark Phillips brought to the attention of the committee that the crime rate for Newington appears to be high when it is compared to other similar communities.

A discussion ensued about the crime rate in Newington. When people google the crime rate in Newington it comes back with a high rate even though Newington is a very safe place to live. J. Hiatt wanted to know what would cause the rate to be so high and what can be done to make the "google results" to come back with more accurate numbers.

Captain Mike Sullivan explained that Newington has less than 1,000 residents, but has about 50,000 people that travel through and work in Newington on a daily basis. If the crime rates were based on the daily population then it would be much lower. The crime rate in America is 35% and the crime rate in Rockingham County is only 18%.

J. Hiatt asked if there could be a disclaimer on the website to explain the crime rate. K. Latchaw thought the committee should develop a statement to put on the business portal to explain why the crime number is high.

Alicia Busconi asked if M. Sullivan could get the crime statistics for each of the zones within the Town of Newington. M. Sullivan said he could get it for the next meeting. The crimes could be split by zones (retail area, village, Pease and South Newington) and by the type of crime (person or property).

T. Connors commended the Police Department for all they do for the town and thought they did a great job.

M. Phillips thanked the committee for listening to his concerns.

The committee would also like to develop a strategy to get more "clicks" on the website. K. Latchaw would like the committee to keep track of the number of clicks each month. J. Coogan would follow up with M. Roy about a strategy to get more hits on the business portal.

Adjournment: J. Hiatt moved to adjourn at 6:43pm. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy
Recorder