

February 27, 2020

Economic Development Commission
Special Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm by Chairperson Stave.

Location: Daniel Rust House, 2011 Main Street

Roll Call: Rick Conti, Barbara Barry, Tim Liptrap, Sondra Astor Stave, Mark Lavitt

Germaine, Cathy - owners of Daniel Rust House

Town Staff: Eric Trott, Director of Planning and Development

Audience: Andrew Ladyga

Adoption of Minutes: The minutes were delayed until the next meeting.

Planner/Manager Reports: Copies of the reports were included in the Commission agenda packet.

New Business:

1. Business visitation with owners of Daniel Rust House.

The owners spoke of how they found the property and eventually purchased it. They spoke of the history with the house as well. A rich description of the long history of the property was provided as well as a detailed tour of the historic home.

Discussions occurred about the work on the regional economic vitality action plan and how it will be looking at regional lodging, tourism, UCONN - and how it relates to bed and breakfasts. One of the overarching themes involves lodging as well as tourism. The owners were encouraged to be part of that discussion.

Questions were raised about the guests who frequent the establishment and how the owners market and advertise the establishment. The House is pet friendly and they offer a variety of food choices for special dietary needs. Children are typically not allowed.

Over the past 4 years, the owners have seen 30 to 40 percent drop in the business. This has created a struggle for sustainability long term with the business. Air B and B's create competition for the business as well.

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The Facebook Tools for Business class would be helpful for the Daniel Rust House. Tim will be offering other classes later in 2020 to assist small businesses.

Wayfinding signs were discussed as a way to create improved visibility.

The Last Green Valley and Walktober is a regional effort that can be of support for tourism and lodging in the area.

The House has flyers available at the Farmer's Market.

Discussion occurred about where the House sends their guests to eat in the region.

Discussion occurred about the impacts of UCONN in the region - student housing, leveraging growth, regional destination.

The Bolton sewer extension on RTE 44 was discussed.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm .

Respectfully submitted,

Eric M. Trott
Director of Planning and Development