



**TOWN OF NORFOLK
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
July 14, 2022, 5:00pm via Zoom
MINUTES**

Present: Libby Borden, Sue Frisch, Larry Hannafin, Kate Johnson, Jim Nelson, Jon Riedeman, Michael Selleck
Absent: Marie Lowe, Tom McGowan
Guests: Adair Mali, Ruth Melville,

Libby Borden called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

The minutes of the June 9, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved.

Libby introduced Adair Mali who asked the EDC if the commission would support her efforts to provide a class in self-defense, with the company Impact, for women in the area. After Adair left, the EDC voted unanimously to support her although a specific financial amount was not determined.

Since there is a vacancy in the EDC, Libby asked the commission if they would consider Brett Robbins as a new member. She also asked if there were other suggestions. Brett and his wife Amanda are new to Norfolk and already very involved. Brett was the secretary of the Fiber Optics committee and Amanda serves on the Norfolk Land Trust. Libby will ask Brett if he would like to serve on the EDC.

The commission had previously agreed on three recurring items to support each year with the provision that at the beginning of each fiscal year, the members would confirm. The commission unanimously agreed to give \$300 for the plantings at the entrance signs to town, \$375 to the Norfolk Hub for a blanket subscription for town commissions and \$2,000 to WIN.

The discussion of the EDC's responsibilities for the POCD and the money for maps will be tabled until Sue does some research.

A group headed by Sue is developing a library of videos about Norfolk, inspired by the WIN videos during Covid. The group hopes to hire a professional cinematographer and raise \$20K for the project.

The Robertson Plaza ribbon cutting will take place on August 7 at 1:00. As part of WIN weekend, Sue is working on having food and entertainment at Station Place during the afternoon with the possibility of having Station Place traffic-free for a short period. In Tom's absence, Sue described the tag sale which will be held at several houses on Saturday from 10:00 – 3:00 during WIN weekend.

The town website is officially under the auspices of the town as of July 1.

Foundation for Norfolk Living continues to move forward with its current project: Haystack Woods and the second floor of the Arcanum Building.

The Friday Nights on the Village Green continue to be well attended. The banner is up. In Michael's absence, Larry volunteered to be in charge of the orange cones on the walkway between the Library and the Village Green on July 22 and July 29.

The distribution plans for the ARPA money are moving forward. At the last meeting of the ARPA group, amounts were tentatively allocated to businesses pending agreement with the Board of Finance and the Selectmen.

Michael has written a letter to the town's LTA (local traffic authority) who is First Selectman Matt. A copy of the letter is attached to the minutes. With Matt's okay, the town should organize a letter-writing campaign to the DOT demanding stricter traffic speed limits.

Jim reported that the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival is off to an excellent start with better audiences than budgeted or anticipated. Robert Whipple, Jim's successor at NCMF, is fully participating.

Under Other Business, Michael said that Haystack Books, a program of the Norfolk Foundation, will run from September 30 – October 2 and is fully booked. Michael further suggested that the Norfolk Foundation be a guest at one of the EDC meetings. Thus ensued a conversation about having guests, organizations or individuals, at every meeting so that the EDC can learn more about what is happening in Norfolk.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58.

Libby Borden and Michael Selleck, Co-chairs of the EDC

July 8, 2022

Mr. Matthew Riiska
First Selectman
Norfolk

Town Hall
19 Maple Ave
Norfolk, CT 06058

Dear Matt,

I am writing to you after several of our conversations over time and as a follow up to my various letters to the DOT regarding traffic speed on Route 44. My most recent response was from Joseph Ouellette, the Executive Director, office of the State Traffic Administration. Mr. Ouellette suggested that I write to you as you are the LTA (Local Traffic Authority) in Norfolk.

This past weekend, The Fourth of July, another accident, and a tragic death of a young veteran on Route 44. As we have discussed many times, traffic speed on Route 44 coming into town from the east (as well as the west) moves well beyond the 40MPH speed limit – which is too high!

The speed limit on Route 44 from the east is 40MPH. It reduces from 50MPH around the curve at George's Norfolk Garage. Then the speed limit continues at 40MPH all the way down the hill (a -8% grade) and suddenly is 25MPH just before Maple Ave. And what follows is a dogleg curve. On the hill is the Boetelle Elementary School with its playground yard just below the highway. As you know, we do have a crosswalk there as well as a blinking yellow light on the sign. The lights are active only during certain hours of the day. As an observer of traffic through this area – no one seems to pay attention to the sign or the lights.

What I have been asking for – and what I have been trying to bring to the DOT's attention is the fact that we do not have ANY speed presence on Route 44. Yes, there is a sign that states the 40MPH speed. yes, there a crosswalk sign and a yellow light at the school, yes, there are two small signs - one stating entering a school zone and the other leaving, and yes, there is a 25MPH sign just before Maple Ave (currently invisible behind a growing bush.) But what is missing is SPEED PRESENCE!

I am proposing the following:

- Reduce the speed from 40MPH to 35MPH as you approach the Welcome to Norfolk signage. This would bring the speed from 50MPH to 40MPH to 35MPH. A gradual reduction in speed limit.
- Install a SPEED LIMIT AHEAD 35 MPH yellow sign alerting drivers to the reduction. Every other town on Route 44 has this signage. New Hartford (speed limit ahead 25MPH) Winsted (speed limit ahead 35MPH) Canaan (speed limit ahead 35MPH) Salisbury (speed limit ahead 30MPH)
There are arguments from the DOT that these signs do not work. Well, if they don't work why does every other town get them?
- Install a "Your Speed" electronics sign at the School Crossing on Route 44.

The speed limit on the west side of town goes from 25MPH to 35MPH to 40MPH and finally 45MPH all the way to Canaan. Why is it so high here in our town?

Mr. Ouellette in his letter to me (attached) recommends that we discuss our safety concerns with the Norfolk LTA, who is the designated official in the Town of Norfolk that reviews traffic requests related to traffic regulations and traffic control devices on the State highway system. He states that if you agree that the speed limit should be restudied, you will contact his office. BTW, the last time a traffic study was completed was November 2018. (Noted in an also attached letter from DOT former Exec., David Sawicki)

I look forward to your response. Clearly, we can do better to calm traffic through our small village.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Selleck
Co-Chair Norfolk Economic Development Commission

Cc: Libby Borden Co-Chair Norfolk EDC
Joseph Ouellette Exec Dir State Traffic Admin