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Newtown is looking forward to the spring for renewal and progress

March 15, 2013 - Connecticut

Newtown is looking forward to the spring for renewal and progress. We are determined that the tragic event of 12/14/12 will not define our community and we are resilient. While this publication is meant for news about real estate deals and progress made in attracting new businesses to our community, the tragedy of 12/14 cannot be put aside without mention. It is still too early in our recovery to do so. Newtown continues to heal with the help of each other, as well as others and we thank everyone for their continued support. We will also continue in the discussions with the world about prevention and about protection of life and the rights of American citizens.

With so many opinions on the subject of prevention and protection of rights, it is hopeful that we as a nation will make the right decisions. We must work together to ensure that our American freedoms provide the correct balance between society and individual rights. As a society we must ensure that our nation of today will provide for the future of tomorrow. As an urban planner and economic developer, I am familiar with the challenge in finding the right balance between community values and progress. We work to help make our community thrive today so that our businesses and the folks that make our town unique will thrive as well. The tragedy of 12/14 brought the community together and we know that moving forward we will continue to grow and thrive.

So as we welcome the coming of spring, I want to share the many opportunities that Newtown, Conn. has to offer. Plans for some major roadway improvements in the vicinity of Exit 10 off I-84 progressed over the winter. Federal funds were earmarked to address traffic safety issues on Rte. 6 (Church Hill Rd.) in the vicinity of Edmond and Commerce Rds. and a plan to realign the roads has been approved. The road realignment creates benefits beyond safety as well. The work will open new land for commercial development and creates a new gateway into Newtown and Sandy Hook Center. The road design work is underway and two new buildings are already approved for construction. Atherton & Associates successfully brokered a lease for a new gas station and convenience store and work is expected to proceed shortly. The land that is available for development in the Newtown Technology Park, businesses along Commerce Rd. and Edmond Rd. will benefit from the traffic improvements as well.

Activities that the economic development commission worked on over the winter include the adoption of changes to the business incentive program, adoption of fast track permitting, marketing of the Fairfield Hills campus and the creation of a new position for our business retention and expansion program. The commission's staff is working with several small business owners and the Newtown Chamber of Commerce on a Newtown Buy Local campaign that will kick off in May. The commission also appointed a special committee following the receipt of a State of Conn. grant for a business assistance program. The program is providing assistance to small businesses in Newtown and Sandy Hook that were impacted by the 12/14 tragedy. Funds are being disbursed directly to

businesses that experienced losses due to business interruption from the traffic congestion and gridlock that occurred in the community. The impacts the tragedy had on Newtown's businesses are continuing to emerge and we are addressing them as best we can. Fortunately we have community support to address ongoing business assistance needs.

Another transportation-related project moving forward is the Sandy Hook Streetscape project. The crossroad intersection is being realigned, the traffic signal upgraded and new sidewalks, curbing, lighting, crosswalks and landscaping will be installed. The streetscape extends the revitalization work started several years ago in this historic business hamlet. Newtown welcomes visitors and residents to Sandy Hook where you can visit the many small shops and restaurants for an enjoyable and unique experience.

Finally, work is progressing on the Hawleyville sewer extension where large tracts of privately owned land await development. This area of Newtown has several projects already approved and the potential to attract major development. Hawleyville sits directly off I-84 at Exit 9.

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