



# nerej

## **Newtown's EDC is ready to help businesses grow locally and provide assistance to new companies**

July 15, 2009 - Connecticut

The Newtown Economic Development Commission is a nine member board that promotes and supports economic growth and development in Newtown. The commission is also the Development Agency for the Newtown Technology Park which is in the final stages of design. The commission meets monthly to discuss its strategy for economic development and to review progress of the various subcommittees that have been organized to work on their strategic plan. The commission's work is supported by the office of economic and community development which is open on a full time basis and is staffed by a director.

The various subcommittees are simultaneously working on different projects. The business advocacy and retention subcommittee is seeking opportunities to enhance home based businesses and is working directly with the Chamber of Commerce on business signs. The recently formed subcommittee successfully lobbied for new zoning regulations that will allow local businesses to use neon signs to attract customers. The strict sign regulations were loosened up to help customers visually identify businesses that are open. It is a small step that is seen as a way to help out during challenging times.

The focus of another committee is on local agricultural businesses. This sector has been a historic force that continues to thrive and deserves support. The subcommittee is working to enhance opportunities for local farmers by working with the coordinators of Newtown's farmers markets and by learning more about Newtown's agricultural community so that they may help them increase their revenues from the farm products. This spring the subcommittee filed an application for participation in the 2009 Farmers Market Promotion Program that is funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

A third subcommittee is working on alternative energy sources. This committee is exploring the feasibility of solar energy generation on land in the Technology Park. The committee is hoping to determine if the site has the potential for solar power generation that will provide the power needs for the water treatment facility and other businesses in the area. This committee is also monitoring the use of energy grants.

A marketing subcommittee is working on a new web site design that will provide better local data to companies, consultants and brokers who are seeking a business location. The importance of having a web site that will provide ease of discovery when making decisions about a business location is a driving factor. The committee is also reviewing the impact of its marketing program. The committee will make improvements to its materials and try out new options that will make Newtown a more viable alternative for economic development and business investment.

A subcommittee that is working on a general goal of maximizing potential for economic development is still in the formulation stages. This committee may help to identify sites that can be targeted for specific development opportunities or it may work on specific sites such as the Technology Park or

the redevelopment of Fairfield Hills.

The commission is moving into the new fiscal year with a fresh look at itself and the services that it provides. The new challenges that have been brought on by the recession demand that the commission increase its effectiveness and provide useful services to the community. As a result, the commission and its staff are exploring creative methods and seeking new tools that will make them an effective partner in the economic development of Newtown. Business as usual is no longer.

Located in northeastern Fairfield County, Newtown has much to offer business tenants and investors. Newtown's Economic Development Commission is ready to help businesses grow locally and provide assistance to new companies who seek a Newtown location. We are ready to help you get your business up and running as quickly as possible in a Newtown location. A listing of available services, business properties and local data is available on the commission's web site at [www.newtown.org](http://www.newtown.org).

Elizabeth Stocker, AICP is director of economic and community development for the Town of Newtown.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540