

# NVCOG Community Planning Newsletter Municipal Spotlight

*Lori Rotella*

*Town Planner/WEO, Land Use Department, Borough of Naugatuck*

Lori Rotella, the Town Planner in Naugatuck, CT, takes a proactive approach when reaching out to local businesses prior to road closures. Instead of relying solely on phone calls, letters, or emails, she has found that personally meeting with business owners is a much more effective method. This face-to-face interaction has yielded significant benefits for the municipality, including economic development initiatives and the establishment of trust with business owners. Lori's outreach efforts extend beyond general road closures, encompassing any municipal closures such as construction, parades, and other events. Her strategy was initially implemented during COVID-19, but continues to be productive and strengthen the municipality.

To ensure business owners are kept informed, Lori works with other departments to diligently keep track of work and regularly requests updates from contractors. This practice allows her to provide timely information to the businesses affected. The business owners are then able to make informed decisions regarding their hours, staff capacity, and potential sales. Furthermore, her efforts have had a positive impact from a land use perspective. By establishing strong relationships with business owners, Lori has cultivated a proactive environment where they consult her before making changes to their businesses like signage adjustments or introducing food trucks. This proactive approach helps the Land Use Department mitigate future enforcement instances.

Lori's initiatives are supported by key stakeholders including Mayor Pete Hess, the Naugatuck Economic Development Corporation, and the Naugatuck Chamber. The support from these entities further strengthens her outreach efforts. Additionally, local businesses have leveraged the information provided by Lori to enhance the vibrancy of events. Business owners can be found offering special deals or discounts related to the event topic, which contributes to a more engaging experience for event attendees. "Personal connections pave the way for meaningful collaboration and vibrant community engagement," said Rotella.

Overall, Lori Rotella's personal approach and proactive outreach have had a positive impact on the Borough of Naugatuck, fostering economic growth, trust-building, and improved open communication with local businesses.



Source: i95ROCK