



May 27, 2016

re: Erin Chambers Woman of Influence Nomination

Two months after Erin Chambers was hired as City Planner in Newton in 2006, the town was rocked by the news that the Maytag Corporation would be closing its corporate headquarters and largest manufacturing plant in the community. This loss of nearly 2000 jobs left Newton searching for a new future. Erin Chambers has been an important part of setting that positive course and leading a community resurgence. With over a dozen new employers, including more than 1000 jobs in the wind energy industry, and major new construction like the Iowa Speedway, Newton is on the rise again.

Charting a new future takes a good plan. Erin led the community effort to update its Comprehensive Plan starting in 2011. The previous plan had not been updated in 15 years and was not reflective of the community's post-Maytag reality. The planning process that Erin guided was very inclusive, with multiple community forums, surveys, and even high school class input sessions. The resulting plan was innovative because it took a broad view of community goals. It went beyond the typical components of land use planning by including chapters on sustainability, health care, and education. This truly comprehensive approach has helped the plan to be utilized by the whole community, not just a narrow portion of City government. The implementation was further aided by Erin's easy-to-use checkbox format of "to-do lists" in each section. In 2014, the plan was awarded the "Grassroots Initiative of the Year" by the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association and the "Project of the Year" by the Iowa City Managers Association.

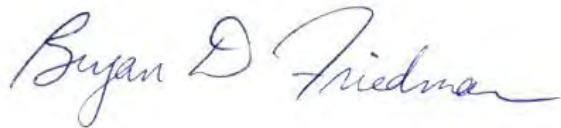
Erin has shown leadership in other areas as she has advanced within the City of Newton organization from City Planner to Director of Planning and Zoning. She has overseen the revamping of the City's code enforcement efforts, greatly improving compliance rates for over 1000 nuisance issues per year. She has also been instrumental in establishing the Red Pride Service Day for high school students to do community projects and has led the re-establishment of the downtown municipal improvement district. By regularly taking on summer interns, Erin has actively shared her skills and insight in helping to train the next generation of planners.

Erin has earned the professional designation as a certified planner by the American Institute of Certified Planners. This AICP accreditation indicates that Erin possesses the knowledge and experience to meet the standards of the profession. Just as important, it means that Erin is obligated to follow the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. On a daily basis, Erin demonstrates this ethical behavior, even in the face of pressure to bend or overlook rules for the

sake of expedience. She approaches the public with straight-forward honesty, striving to thoroughly explain ordinances and approval processes with an unfailingly positive demeanor. These professional traits have now taken on even more influence on a statewide basis as Erin has recently joined the executive board of the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association.

It is great to work with an outstanding colleague like Erin Chambers. I strongly recommend her for the Meredith Emerging Woman of Influence Award. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryan D. Friedman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bryan Friedman  
Director of Finance and Development  
City of Newton, Iowa