



StartUP Bristol Task Force - Special Meeting
February 20, 2020 4:00 p.m.
ECD Conference Room, Second Floor, City Hall, Bristol, CT
Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Erik St. Pierre, Lynn Pernal, Michael Sweeney, Lawrence Covino
Absent: Eric Orschel, Mike Zammet
Staff: Justin Malley, Mayor Zoppo-Sassu
Guests: April Tibbetts, Krista Tibbetts: Family Roots Produce Market
Erika Stirk, David Landi: Bakery on Maple
Leanne Rusgrove, J.R. Rusgrove: Pure Foods LLC

1. Call to Order

Erik St. Pierre called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Approval of Minutes of the July 17, 2019 special meeting.

Discussion.

Michael Sweeney made a motion seconded by Lynn Pernal to approve the minutes from July 17, 2019 as modified. Motion approved.

4. Discuss New Projects

a. Initial Business Plan Review(s)

Justin introduced the businesses that the Task Force would be seeing today.

#1 Family Roots Produce Market

April Tibbetts provided background of the business. Their business will offer fresh fruits and vegetables. The location they are looking at is at the old Supernatural at the North End. They discussed their vision for the store. The committee asked questions.

Their current plans are to be leasing the property from March 1 and plan to open in the space by June 1. Prep will be done onsite. They are still researching companies for the buildout. They are in the process of obtaining their LLC. They are working on negotiating and getting the lease as well. They do have a first draft of their business plan. Justin explained how the grant process would work. Several suggestions were made from the Task Force as they proceed with their plans and negotiations.

#2 Bakery on Maple LLC

Erika Stirk introduced their business. She has been operating for 7 years out of the home besides her full-time job. They have just obtained their LLC. Their specialty is custom cakes. They are first in the State to receive their license for the cottage food laws – they explained. There are a number of limitations from the State on that type of business and several rules. They provided examples. It has to be direct to consumer. They are now turning away business.

Justin explained it is hard to find turnkey food locations. They have found a place but there would be a significant cost involved. They reviewed their financing and leasing plans for the onset of this business. Discussion.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu excused herself from the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Erika and David answered questions. Their bread is 50% of the business, and they will be doing some wholesale as well.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu rejoined the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Justin explained the next steps. There needs to be some personal equity in the project if they proceed to apply for a grant from the City.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu excused herself from the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

There was a brief discussion on the bakery. There was also a brief discussion of Better Half Brewing and how the food portion of the business is doing.

b. StartUP Meet-Up Series

Michael Sweeney introduced and explained the idea. There was general discussion on the idea and how it could be used to assist new businesses. The meetups would be very casual. Different guests would come to the meetup who have particular skills in business and can offer advice and answer the questions about starting a business and the issues the business may face and offer suggestions. This would be a way to assist the smaller businesses which may not be able to afford other programs.

Discussion about how this would work:

- Who would run this?
- Would this be a spin-off of StartUP Bristol?
- These businesses may eventually be coming to StartUP Bristol.
- This would be an alternate to SCORE.
- The program would help prep businesses before they can take the next step to starting their business.
- The Chamber and PYVOT have many other programs and commitments right now. (Mike Sweeney is on the Chamber board.)
- There would be an opportunity to set up mentorships.
- This could start as a pilot program.
- The next steps were discussed. Mike Sweeney and Justin Malley to get with the Chamber.

Eduardo Garces joined the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

The meetups idea was discussed. Eduardo Garces offered his thoughts as to what is needed:

- These should not be mandatory.
- These should be late in the day.
- It would be a discussion about what the entrepreneur is experiencing – no need for them to share their specific ideas.
 - Be available to answer questions.
 - Exist as a support group.
- Mike added perhaps the grant recipients could speak at the meeting since they actually received grants.
- Find volunteers in specific subjects – legal, accounting, etc.
- Absolutely no sales pitch – just available to answer questions.

Eduardo Garces excused himself from the meeting.

5. Executive Session – The Task Force went into Executive Session at 5:35 p.m.

a. Downtown Grant Application

The Task Force reconvened at 6:20 p.m.

6. Take Any Action as Necessary on Above Items

Lawrence Covino made a motion to approve a 50% matching Downtown Grant up to \$60,000 to Pure Foods, LLC contingent on receiving a Certificate of Occupancy for operating a food service restaurant at 457 North Main Street. Michael Sweeney seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

7. Adjournment

Lawrence Covino made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m., seconded by Michael Sweeney. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Cooper
Recording Secretary