

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MINUTES – Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 2, 2020, 5:00 P.M.
Council Chambers

ATTENDEES: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu, Council Member Preleski, Commissioner Mills
Commissioners Hick, Schmelder, Goldwasser, Rasmussen-Tuller, Zammett (video)

ABSENT: Commissioner Cyr

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator

GUESTS: Craig Minor (video)

I. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation

III. **Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to accept the minutes of June 4, 2020, seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. The commissioners voted in favor and the minutes were accepted.**

IV. Communications

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to file the Communications, seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

V. New Business

A. Neighborhood Assistance Act

Dawn Leger reviewed and explained the process. The deadline has been extended to the end of July. There was one new applicant. A motion is necessary to approve the applications that will be submitted.

Commissioner Mills made a motion to approve the organizations that applied for the 2020 Neighborhood Assistance Program and refer to the City Council for approval at its July 14, 2020 meeting.

The NAA Applicants are:

- 1. Bristol Boys & Girls Club**
- 2. Bristol Historical Society**
- 3. Greater Bristol Realty Corporation**
- 4. Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity**
- 5. Imagine Nation, A Museum Early Learning Center**
- 6. Nutmeg Symphony Orchestra**
- 7. Prudence Crandall Center Inc.**
- 8. Shepard Meadows Therapeutic Riding Center**
- 9. United Way of West Central Connecticut**

Council Member Preleski seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion was approved.

B. Transfer Request

Justin reported this is a housekeeping item.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to transfer \$100 from the ECD City Part-time Wages & Salaries account to the ECD City Overtime Wages & Salaries account and to forward to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

C. HOME2 and Conference Center

This project broke ground last week. Justin provided information on this project and the discussion of a tax incentive. This abatement is shorter than the ones we usually do (10-year). Justin explained the differences – it begins during construction.

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion to approve a real property tax assessment fixing agreement for Bristol Hotel 2 LLC or its assigns contingent on initiation and completion of construction – as evidenced by a certificate of occupancy – of a HOME2 hotel, conference/event center, underground parking garage, and associated site improvements. Said property tax assessment fixing agreement shall be subject to conditions identified in Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-65b and shall take the following form:

Tax Year 1 (construction period) – 100% real property tax abatement applied to value of improvements

Tax Year 2 (construction period) – 100% real property tax abatement applied to value of improvements

Tax Year 3 – 80% real property tax abatement

Tax Year 4 – 80% real property tax abatement

Tax Year 5 – 80% real property tax abatement

Tax Year 6 – 50% real property tax abatement

In the event Bristol Hotel 2 LLC or its assigns ceases construction and/or operations of a HOME2 hotel and adjoining conference/event center, any tax abatement agreement associated with the property will cease. And to refer to City Council for action.

Commissioner Schmelder seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

D. Economic Development Grant Rework (KPG Automation)

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu provided background and Justin summarized their current needs and request.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to allow KPG Automation LLC the ability to utilize up to \$20,000 of its remaining grant award (approved at the April 2020 ECD board meeting) balance to assist in the funding of HVAC/Air Systems and other upgrades to 231 Century Drive. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion. Discussion. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

E. Farmers Market Update

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu provided an update. People have been pleased that we are following the government guidelines. We are meeting the needs of both vendors and shoppers. The crowds have been large and the footprint has been enlarged (location of vendors). We are using the Parks

Department golf cart to ferry people around. There are still many people coming to the downtown area on Saturday a.m. Justin added that there are four billboards around town advertising the Farmers market.

F. J.H. Sessions Project Update

Justin provided an update. We are working with a land bank. Arthur Bogen is stepping down from the Connecticut Brownfield Land Bank. We are currently speaking with another land bank who has shown interest and been given a tour of the building. We are awaiting a proposal. We will bring the request to the Board of Finance for the fund allocation request. Questions were answered.

G. 894 Middle St. Update

Dawn Leger reported that the project is complete. The land is clean and we are waiting for final payment from DECD. There will be test wells on the site for a few years to monitor the ground water. This is a requirement from DECD and DEEP. Environmental Land Use Restrictions (ELUR) are being placed on the parcel. Then it can be sold. She then answered questions.

H. Downtown Zoning

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu reported there are several drive-throughs in the downtown area and these have been a lifeline during the current COVID crisis. They have been hearing from potential developers and companies who want to be downtown and the drive-through is an issue. There are drive-throughs scattered around the perimeter of the downtown area. Many of these have been heavily used in March and April. Occasionally there are requests and we have been monitoring this and also the Zoning Commission agendas as they pertain to downtown development. There has been a request for a text amendment in order to allow it. There is one remaining approved drive-through that is grandfathered in and would be allowed. There will be an application soon to the Zoning Commission to allow a drive through. The Mayor believes that this application should be received with some input from the Economic and Community Development Commission.

Justin added that the text amendment has been approved by the Planning Commission and is being forwarded to the Zoning Commission. He is looking to see comments from the Board and see how they feel. The drive-through for McDonalds was because of the relocation of that facility to another part of Centre Square. Dunkin Donuts does not have one as at their physical location it would prove difficult. He and the Mayor then answered questions and the Board gave their input.

Justin asked if the Board wanted to have him submit a letter of general interest and support about drive-throughs as a general concept for the downtown. The board agreed and Justin will prepare something on Monday for the upcoming Zoning Commission meeting next week and get it back to the board members for feedback. Justin added that the text amendment that is before the Commission now allows for a drive through by special permit so decisions would be made project by project. This would provide some security depending on location.

Commissioner Mills made a motion to authorize Justin Malley to draft a letter that will be reviewed early next week to be presented to the Zoning Commission at their July meeting. Commissioner Schmelder seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

The Mayor also recommended calling a Downtown Committee meeting soon – probably late summer/early fall.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

- Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller asked about Savers closing. The Mayor has asked Federal Realty for a contact for Savers.
- Commissioner Goldwasser asked if Memorial Boulevard will be closed for the weekend. Answer: No.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

- There was general discussion about local business activity and various questions were raised concerning the Carrier project and its neighbor, the Dodge Village building, Firehouse Subs, and if there might be any more timing issues for the grants that have been approved and might be slipping due to the COVID-19 situation, such as for hirings.
- The Mayor reported there has been some activity at the Chic Miller location.

VIII. Any Other Business

A. Committee Reports

1. Policy Committee: Commissioner Schmelder reported that a request was received from the United Way for reuse of funds as their proposed summer youth work program will not be held due to COVID-19 restrictions and concern about the safety of the students.

Commissioner Zammett made a motion to ratify the action of the Policy Committee to approve the change of use of the funds from the summer work program to the Farmers to Families food distribution program. Commissioner Goldwasser second the motion. All commissioners present voted in favor and the motion passed.

2. There was a discussion with Craig Minor representing Greater Bristol Realty about the group's request for an extension of their 2019 grant award to construct 4 houses in Bristol for low income families. That extension ends on September 1 but no work has been done on the project to date. He will come back to the board in August to report on where they are in their fund raising.

B. Council Liaison Reports

Council Member Preleski reported that Council members have been reaching out to business owners as a priority.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hick, all present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Christine Cooper, Recording Secretary