

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MINUTES – Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 6, 2020, 5:00 P.M.
Bristol Historical Society

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

ABSENT: - - -

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

GUESTS: Zlatan Hukic, BHF Logistics
Stephen Pelton, EcoSmart Home Services
James Ziogas, James Ziogas, Jr., Attorney at Law

I. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

II. Public Participation

There was no public participation

III. **Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to accept the minutes of July 2, 2020, seconded by Commissioner Mills. The commissioners voted in favor and the minutes were accepted.**

IV. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to file the Consent Agenda seconded by Commissioner Hick. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Mills made a motion to proceed to item VIII. A., seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All voted in favor.

VIII. Any Other Business

A. Committee Reports

1. Industrial Committee

a. Southeast Bristol Business Park

Justin Malley summarized the Industrial Committee meeting held at 4:15 p.m. today. He spoke about BHF Logistics and their proposal for Lot 2 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park. Mr. Hukic ("Sal") spoke about the business and their operations, currently located in New Britain, and their needs. He reviewed his site plan, described their operations, and answered questions. Justin explained how the Guidelines would be amended to allow this particular use.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to allow Economic and Community Development staff to take the necessary steps, including obtaining necessary approvals from existing property owners in the Southeast Bristol Business Park, to modify the Southeast Bristol Business Park Guidelines to (1) Eliminate "trucking" firms as a prohibited use under section 1.3.d. and (2) add "Trucking Terminal Facilities" as a "Fifth Priority" permitted use under section 1.2. Commissioner Hick seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to allow Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, or Acting Mayor, to execute a letter of Intent with BHF Logistics, Inc. or its assigns for the sale of Lot #2 in the Southeast Bristol Business Park for purposes of constructing an approximately 6,000-10,000 square foot corporate headquarters/trucking terminal facility. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed. Mr. Hukic excused himself from the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Justin spoke about a second business who attended the Industrial Committee meeting: R. Pelton Builders, Inc. – dba EcoSmart Home Services. He described the business and its operations and answered questions.

Commissioner Cyr made a motion to allow Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, or Acting Mayor, to execute a letter of intent with R. Pelton Builders, Inc. – dba EcoSmart Home Services – or its assigns for the sale of Lot #6 in the Southeast Bristol Business Park for purposes of constructing an approximately 12,000 square foot corporate headquarters for EcoSmart. Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to proceed to Item V.D. under New Business. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Attorney James Ziogas joined the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

V. New Business

D. Economic Development Grant Rework

Justin summarized the grant project which the board approved last year for Bristol Family Eyecare. Justin explained how the grant amount was arrived at. Dr. Zervas did a separate assessment which came in at a different amount and is requesting a review of this grant for a possible increase. Attorney Ziogas added information about the assessed value of this project. Justin and Attorney Ziogas answered questions. Discussion.

Justin agreed our guidelines need to be reviewed going forward. Clarification is needed from Tom DeNoto and it was suggested to table this issue for one month.

Commissioner Mills made a motion to table this subject for two months (amended) to obtain more information and will come back to Dr. Zervas within 60 days. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

A. Board of Finance Requests

Commissioner Cyr made a motion to approve an additional appropriation of \$1,700 for fees received from the Farmer's Market as of June 30, 2020 and to refer to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve transfers totaling \$13,763 to address year-end negative balances as follows: \$5,426 from City Professional Fees to City Regular Wages & Salaries; \$7,934 from Residential Rehabilitation to CDBG Regular Wages & Salaries; \$317 from Residential Rehabilitation to CDBG FICA; \$72 from Residential Rehabilitation to CDBG Medicare; and \$14 from Residential Rehabilitation to CDBG Insurance, and to refer to the

Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Mills made a motion to approve request for 2020 Year-End Carryovers for City accounts as follows: \$1,560 for Professional Fees, \$2,000 for Travel Reimbursement, \$1,475 for Printing, \$4,640 for Conferences & Memberships, \$2,500 for Trade Shows, and \$3,000 for Downtown Revitalization Activity, and to refer to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Cyr made a motion to approve a transfer from CDBG Project-Bristol Adult Resource Center HVAC account to the CDBG Residential Rehabilitation account in the amount of \$859.50 and to refer to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion to approve request for 2020 Carryovers for the following: CDBG Public Service grant to For Goodness Sake for \$1,571.38; CDBG Public Facilities grant for Affordable Home Ownership for \$28,000; and CDBG Public Facilities grant for St. Vincent DePaul COVID-19 in the amount of \$393,989, and to forward to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu briefly discussed the J.H. Sessions project and asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve a transfer from Capital Non-Recurring Fund to Professional Fees – JH Sessions Project in the amount of \$100,000 and to forward to the Joint Board for action. Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller seconded the motion all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

B. Tax Abatement Policy

Justin introduced this subject and explained how this policy works. The attached memo is for information and discussion going forward. There was discussion and Justin answered questions. This will be brought to the board again but may go to the Policy Committee first.

C. Enterprise Zone – 185 Curtiss St.

Justin introduced this topic.

Commissioner Schmelder made the following motion: Whereas, per Article XIV, Section 18-203 of the City of Bristol Code of Ordinances, "The municipality may provide any additional tax abatements or deferrals as it deems necessary for any property located in such an enterprise zone." I hereby make a motion" Retroactive to October 1, 2019, to fix the property assessment of 185 Curtiss St. at \$181,930 for a period concluding September 30, 2020. The property assessment fixing agreement is applicable for the construction period as the property was converted to self storage use, subject to all conditions identified for commercial projects as outlined in Article XIV "Enterprise Zone Assessments" of the City of Bristol Code of Ordinances. Be it further resolved that this matter be forwarded to the Bristol Assessor's Office for review. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

E. Realtor for 894 Middle Street

Justin provided some background on the property. The cleanup is done and we are ready to market the property. We have already received unsolicited offers. The property should be made available to as many offers as we can. There should be a process to put the property out to the public. Should there be a realtor to handle this? Commissioner Goldwasser believes there is already a process in place because it had been done in the past.

Discussion. Justin is working with the City's Purchasing agent on this. Justin will find the precedent and review.

F. Small Business Grant Program

Justin would like to make an additional transfer request into the Small Business grant account from the Economic Development expenses account. He is requesting \$50,000.

Commissioner Mills made a motion to request a transfer from the Economic Development expenses account to the Small Business grant account in the amount of \$50,000 and to refer to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Schmelder seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

G. Downtown Boundaries

Currently, the "downtown boundary" is the Opportunity Zone which is census tract 4061. Skytop Motors is buying an auto body shop just outside the boundary. The location is actually within the Enterprise Zone. After discussion there was a consensus to use the Enterprise Zone as the downtown area for purposes of the Downtown Grant Program. The program could perhaps be renamed, for example the "Downtown/West End" grant program. Discussion. Another possibility is to create a new fund for the West End. This will be looked into for the future. Meanwhile, the West End will be considered an allowable area for the Downtown Grant program.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

There was no new business by Commissioners. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu recommended the commissioners take a look at the mural currently being painted on Main Street.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Cyr commented that the Residences on Main were proceeding quickly.

Dawn Leger announced that the City had been awarded a new Assistance to Firefighters grant to do more training for \$139,797.27 from FEMA. There is a City match of 10%. FEMA also announced a blanket extension for the grants that we currently have. The next round of training is September.

Justin reported that Dawn Leger will be working on the next round of brownfield funding for the cleanup of the Sessions building.

Dawn also reported on the State Cemetery grant which is on the Council agenda for next week.

Commissioner Schmelder asked about Nuchies. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu said that the owners have been thinking of retiring for a while. Justin added that they will try to sell the business.

VIII. Any Other Business

B. Council Liaison Report – There was no council liaison report.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cyr, all present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Christine Cooper, Recording Secretary