

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 7, 2023 5:00pm
City Hall West Meeting Room #1 and on Zoom

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Council Member Panioto, Commissioners Schmelder, Massarelli, Hick, Mills, Verikas, Goldwasser, and Rasmussen-Tuller (Zoom).

ABSENT: Dawn Nielsen - Marketing and PR Specialist

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley - Executive Director, Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator, David Sgro - Housing & Project Director, Andrew Armstrong - Asst. City Planner/Development Coordinator, and Sharon Arsego - Sr. Admin. Assistant

GUESTS: Louis Silva - Community Investment Corporation (Zoom), Charlie Talmadge, President - Development Planning Solutions, Attorney Jim Ziogas, Dave Preleski, Treasurer - City of Bristol, Robert Vitale and Sharma J. Khan – Yellow King Brews

I. **Call to Order**

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and led the room in The Pledge of Allegiance. The Board then introduced themselves for members of the gallery.

The mayor recognized ECD Department member David Sgro who was present. Mr. Sgro was named the city's Employee of the Month for his exceptional assistance with Bristol residents who participate in the city's Residential Rehabilitation Grant program that he manages.

The mayor also noted ECD Department member Dawn Nielsen's medical leave has been successful and she is eager to return to the city and her tasks as PR & Marketing Specialist.

Mayor Caggiano announced the initial Downtown Live show, Celebrating Queen, being held at the BAIMS Rockwell Theater Saturday, September 9th and encouraged all who can to attend.

II. **Public Participation**

There was no Public Participation.

III. **Minutes: August 3, 2023**

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the August 3, 2023 meeting. Council Member Panioto made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Massarelli. There were no changes or additions. All were in favor and the Minutes were received into the record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

Mayor Caggiano asked for a motion to file the report. The motion to file the Consent Agenda was made by Commissioner Goldwasser. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

A. Downtown Update

Justin Malley reintroduced the Shaffer Beacon Downtown Grant wording update. Shaffer Beacon brought a suggested change to the grant language based on a shift in their employee count as the result of an acquisition.

The following was the motion proposed to the Board as read by Council Member Panioto:

To modify the Downtown Grant awarded to The Shaffer Co. LLC, now known as Shaffer Beacon Mechanical LLC, dated September 27, 2021 to reflect the staffing and company vehicle commitments contained in its letter dated August 29, 2023 to ensure the company maintains and grows its local presence as part of the grant award.

Discussion followed concerning monitoring of the employee and vehicle registration count within Bristol. The agreement was that payroll verification and verification of the vehicles registered in Bristol would be completed annually and the wording would be added to the contract as well.

With that agreement added to the motion, it was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

Justin Malley then introduced an ECD commissioned marketing video of the Sessions building where cleanup has begun. Mayor Caggiano shared the video on Zoom. This video will be released to the public. The Board suggested posting it to YouTube as well as the usual social media channels. It was noted the remediation at Sessions will be completed Spring 2024.

Justin Malley and the mayor then spoke to Parcel 10 at Center Square. The project is proposed for more apartments than the original plan, and as a live-work space with commercial units on the ground floors with apartments above.

Mayor Caggiano addressed questions about the completion of the downtown parking garages and moving dates for the city employees returning to the renovated offices.

B. Zoning Language

Attorney James Ziogas addressed the Board regarding a proposed Zoning Language change where live-work units in certain zones are not currently allowed. Live-work units are offices in the front with living spaces in the back. Business applications for this development include accountants, barber shops, lawyers, and other professional services.

Attorney Ziogas advised that the language change was already approved 5 – 0 by the Planning Commission. He asked the Board to provide a letter of support for this to the Zoning Commission.

Discussion followed and included support from the Board. It was noted that the next Zoning Board meeting is September 18, 2023.

The Board proposed that a motion should be made for the ECD Staff to write a letter of support of the live-work zoning language change on behalf of the ECD Board and addressed to the Zoning Commission. It was agreed that the letter would be provided to the Board for their approval. If there are any objections to the letter, the ECD Board will need to advise the ECD Staff that at that time.

The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and seconded by Commissioner Massarelli. All voted in favor and the motion was passed into the record without objection.

Charlie Talmadge, President of Development Planning Solutions, addressed the Board regarding a proposed change to zoning language that would allow for self-storage units in the downtown area. The Funk building is the main focus of this new wording which has been written with limits designed to contain self-storage to existing buildings.

Discussion followed and included concerns about hours of operation, parking, content storage restrictions, and access to the building.

The Board proposed that a motion should be made for the ECD Staff to write a letter in support of the proposed zoning language on behalf of the ECD Board and addressed to the Zoning Commission. The letter should include the Board's concerns and desired consideration of the hours of operation as this affects a residential area. The letter will be provided to the Board for their approval. If there are any objections to the letter, the ECD Board will need to advise the ECD Staff at that time.

The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and seconded by Commissioner Hick. All voted in favor and the motion was passed into the record without objection.

C. Revolving Loan Program

Justin Malley introduced Louis Silva of Community Investment Corporation (CIC), a potential partner for the city's Revolving Loan Program. Mr. Silva shared about CIC's history and reach within Bristol, and the benefits working with CIC as the loan program's service provider will bring to the city.

Justin Malley advised that the city's attorneys are working with Purchasing, ECD and CIC to draft a contract. The details of the program can't be fully decided until the city has a working contract with CIC. Dave Preleski spoke in support of working with CIC.

Commissioner Goldwasser read the following motion with one change in wording from the proposed "execute" to the revised "negotiate":

To recommend that the City of Bristol negotiate a contract with Community Investment Corporation (CIC) to serve as the vendor managing loan origination/loan servicing functions associated with the Economic and Community Development Revolving Loan Program.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All voted in favor and the motion was moved into the record without objection.

D. Industrial Park Update

Justin Malley provided an update on Lot #6 in the Bristol Business Park. EcoSmart, an alternative energy source company, came in prior to the pandemic and received approval from both the ECD Board and the city's Zoning Board to purchase and develop on Lot #6. EcoSmart is now ready to close on the land and commit to construction. They will be closing as soon as possible with the city's Corporation Counsel.

E. Property Referral

Justin Malley advised the Board of a private owner who has land locked property for sale on March Rd. in Bristol. The city charter requires the city Clerk's office to notify city departments when there is land for sale.

Discussion followed and the motion was read by Council Member Panioto as listed below:

To recommend that ECD staff notify the City Council Real Estate Committee and/or Corporation Counsel that the ECD does not have interest in the approximately two-acre property known as Lot #10, Map #65 Marsh Road.

The motion was seconded by Mayor Caggiano. All voted in favor and the motion was passed into the record without objection.

F. CDBG Update

Dr. Dawn Leger updated the Board on her annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) presentations being made to various boards of community organizations in the month of September. Additional updates were provided on The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) which is in its final draft and posted to the city's website. Dr. Leger also referenced a short online survey and its goal to better understand the community's priorities for the use of CDBG Funds.

Dr. Leger will be holding community discussion meetings at the Bristol Public Library Friday, October 6 and Saturday, October 7 from 2pm to 4pm each day. The public is encouraged to attend.

Dr. Leger announced the Assistance to Firefighters Grant 2023 in the amount of \$375,000 for the training of fire personnel this year. This is the fourth time the city has been awarded this grant funding, this amount is more than the previous year, and in total, Bristol has been awarded over \$900,000 in training grants for the fire department.

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to accept the CDBG Update into the record. The motion was put forward by Commissioner Schmelder and seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion carried into the record.

G. 894 Middle Street

Justin Malley reviewed the Goman & York data they were commissioned to provide for the property. They will also assist the city with selling and reviewing buyer's offers for this location. The marketing component will be done through LoopNet.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

There was no New Business by Commissioners

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

There was no Old Business by Commissioners

VIII. Committee Reports

A. City Council Member Report

Council Member Panioto announced that today was ESPN's 44th Anniversary. The mayor was present when Alexandra Duam, Commissioner for the CT Dept. of Economic and Community Development, declared September 7th as ESPN Day in the state of Connecticut.

IX. Executive Session

A. Downtown Grant

Commissioner Verikas recused herself from Executive Session. She was not in the room for either the Executive Session discussion or the reading of the motion. Commissioner Verikas was also not in the room when the vote was taken and did not take part in the vote on the grant motion.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion for the Board to move into Executive Session. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Council Member Panioto. All were in favor and the Board moved into Executive Session at 6:20pm.

Mayor Caggiano noted that no votes were taken while in Executive Session.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion for the Board to return from Executive Session. The motion was made by Commissioner Schmelder and seconded by Council Member Panioto. All were in favor and the Board returned from Executive Session at 6:58pm.

Commissioner Goldwasser read the following amended motion to read "the addition of six full-time positions" from the originally proposed motion of "the addition of seven full-time positions":

To approve a Downtown Grant of up to \$66,000 – comprised of up to \$60,000 representing a 50% match (or maximum amount of \$60,000, whichever is less) of a total project cost of a minimum of \$120,000 and up to \$6,000 for the addition of six full-time positions to its payroll – to Yellow King Brews LLC for building improvements associated with the establishment of a coffee, cocktail, and food "bar" establishment at 67 Race Street and to refer to the Board of Finance for information.

This motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Verikas returned to the meeting after the conclusion of the grant motion vote.

Mayor Caggiano made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hick seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:10pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary