

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 5, 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 (Zoom), and Rasmussen-Tuller.

ABSENT: None

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

GUESTS: Hilary Stoudt, 177 West Street, Bristol

I. **Call to Order**

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:01pm and led the room in The Pledge of Allegiance.

II. **Public Participation**

There was no Public Participation.

Mayor Caggiano made a motion to move up item **V. New Business A. Façade Improvement**. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion which was seconded by council Member Panioto. All were in favor of the 177 West Street, Bristol project being presented at this time.

Justin Malley prefaced the presentation with a review of the Façade Improvement Grant program. Hilary Stoudt is applying for a Façade Improvement Grant from the city. Ms. Stoudt briefly discussed the building's history at 177 West Street, including the effects of the flood of 1955 and recent updates done. Additional work would include new glass fronts and awnings. The building consists of three store fronts and six apartments, five of which are refurbished. The remaining apartment will be updated as well. The Board expressed appreciation for the work on the building.

The Board confirmed they had provided ECD Staff with the authorization to approve the Façade Grants and Justin will continue to report on them as the applications are received. The mayor requested a motion to accept this report. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the report was accepted into the record.

III. **Minutes: September 7, 2023**

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 7, 2023 meeting. Council Member Rasmussen-Tuller made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Hick. 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

Justin Malley requested Dawn Nielsen speak to the Marketing Report items. Dawn advised of the new State of Connecticut brand launch planned for October 17th at the Bristol Bazaar. The Bazaar was chosen as a unique business model and maker's space, meeting the feel for the State's branding campaign. Dawn also provided an update on the All-Heart Website with a marketing push for it in November.

The mayor asked for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. The motion was made by Commissioner Schmelder and seconded by Council Member Panioto. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

B. Downtown Update

Justin Malley introduced Lou Sterling from Rooster's Chicken and Waffles. Mr. Sterling provided a brief history of how his wife and he started their franchise business during the pandemic. The new Bristol location will be their headquarters with a family friendly environment, and a bar atmosphere which is a new format for them. The Sterlings bought the old Gateway Café building in Bristol, they own a number of their current locations, and they are debt free. Justin Malley advised that Rooster's will be applying for a city grant for this project. Projecting opening date is December 1st, 2023.

The mayor excused himself from the meeting at 5:30pm. Commissioner Schmelder served as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Justin Malley and Dawn Nielsen spoke to the transition to City Hall noting the date is shifting but the move will be soon.

They also noted the upcoming shows for Rockwell Live at the Rockwell Theater at the Bristol Arts and Innovation Magnet School:

The Rocky Horror Picture Show October 28th

Scenes – A Billy Joel Experience November 18th, and

Christmas with the Nashville King December 16th and

now a Matinee December 17th has been added due to high demand.

Commissioner Mills advised that a \$10 rebate for the Queen show tickets would be issued to those event's ticket holders due to the power outage that closed the show early. Commissioner Hick suggested the option of season tickets be offered to encourage regular ticket holders and group purchases.

Justin Malley provided an update on the Wheeler Health building and it remains on target for completion in June 2024. The Carrier project is also moving ahead.

C. Accounts Update

Justin Malley provided an update on the ECD Grant accounts with the expected move into the Revolving Loan Program. There are projects coming up that started months ago and the ECD will be funding them. This account update is a report of the current funding levels and needs before the Revolving Loan Program starts.

D. Revolving Loan Program

Justin Malley discussed the Revolving Loan Program contract which is the first of its kind and needs to be reviewed by the City Council. The program partner Community Investment Corporation (CIC) is working with ECD through October to not lose momentum. Louis Silva from CIC will be at a Special Meeting Workshop with the ECD Board in November or December to discuss loan guidelines. Discussion of the drafted loan guidelines continued in preparation of the anticipated meeting with CIC.

Commissioner Schmelder entertained a motion to accept the Agenda item reports A through D. The motion was made by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller and seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the reports were accepted into the record.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Verikas expressed concern about road closures due to events in the city and how they negatively impact area businesses. The recent road closures weren't communicated to them at the Bristol Bazaar, and they weren't part of the conversation about how it would negatively impact their business on Race Street.

Discussion continued about past, present and possible future road closure communications. The discussion resulted in the need for more business inclusivity in the event permit process with improved overall communication to the businesses.

The following motion was made in response to this discussion:

Commissioner Mills made the motion that the ECD Board recommends to Public Works and the Police Departments that more communication about requested road closures be provided to businesses and residents, and for them to be part of the permit application process. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Massarelli. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

Commissioner Hick asked about the fuel cell project on Riverside Avenue. Justin Malley advised that ECD staff has been working with the fuel cell company. The mayor and ECD have been petitioning for structure demolition to begin by the end of October.

Commissioner Mills asked about the new Bristol Events Center and a tour of the location. Andrew Armstrong advised there was a temporary Certificate of Occupancy given for a portion of the location for a recently held one-time event. The final opening date is yet unknown but there is a Chamber dinner set for that space on October 26th.

Commissioner Verikas asked about Nonna's Italian Market on Farmington Avenue that had closed. Justin Malley advised the owner is looking for a new location and has been in contact with Justin about his search. The owner will not be reopening at the Farmington Avenue location.

There was no other 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 the next City Council Meeting will be at the new City Hall on October 12th with limited access to the building. Commissioner Schmelder asked about an Open House for the public. Dawn Nielsen advised that one is being planned.

B. CBDG Policy Committee Meeting

Dr. Dawn Leger reported on two meetings of the CBDG Policy Committee with two proposed motions for the Board to vote on.

The first motion below was read and put forward by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller:

To approve the request to carry over unused administrative funds from CBDG-CV grant to the current fiscal year budget for St. Vincent DePaul Mission, to support expenses for running a warming center/overflow shelter during the cold weather months: \$16,561.75.

This motion was seconded by Council Member Panioto. Commissioner Schmelder noted that as the Chair of the CBDG Policy Committee, he can attest that this is a valid use of the funds and not an issue if there is an audit. All Board members voted in favor and the motion passed into the record.

The second motion below was read and put forward by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller:

To revoke a CBDG Public Facilities grant in the amount of \$12,000 awarded to the New England Carousel Museum in Program Year 48 to rebuild outdoor railings, due to the high bids received that rendered this project untenable.

This motion was seconded by Commissioner Mills. All Board members voted in favor and the motion passed into the record.

IX. Executive Session

A. Downtown Grant

Commissioner Schmelder requested a motion for the Board to move into Executive Session. The motion was made by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller and seconded by Council Member Panioto. All were in favor and the Board moved into Executive Session at 6:00pm.

The Board entertained the motion to leave Executive Session and return to Regular Session with a motion put forward by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Regular Session reconvened at 6:10pm. Commissioner Schmelder noted that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Council Member Panioto read the following motion for the Downtown Grant application:

To approve a Downtown Grant of up to \$15,382 – comprised of up to \$13,382 representing a 50% match of a total project cost up to \$26,764 and up to \$2,000 for the addition of two full-time positions to its payroll – to Sowder’s Speed Shop LLC for building improvements including paving a parking area and façade upgrades at 292 Riverside Avenue and to refer to the Board of Finance for information.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Schmelder called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hick put the motion forward and it was seconded by Commission Rasmussen-Tuller. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary