

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MINUTES – Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 1, 2021, 5:00 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers, City Hall

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

ABSENT: - - -

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator; Raymond Rogozinski, Public Works Director

GUESTS: Bill Mascetti, ACG North America

I. Vice-Chair Howard Schmelder called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

II. Public Participation

Bill Mascetti provided an update on the Hotel construction. Several problems were encountered and he explained how they were solved. Dr. Niznick will be coming to town and he asked if there were any questions.

III. **Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion to accept the minutes of March 4, 2021, seconded by Commissioner Hick. 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 Rasmussen-Tuller. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

V. New Business

A. 10 Main St. Project – This item is tabled.

B. BOF Transfer

Justin explained the need for the transfer.

Commissioner Zammett made a motion to approve the request to transfer \$15,000 from the Residential Rehab Multi account to the Residential Rehab Single account and to forward to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Hick seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

Justin asked the board if they had any ideas on how to increase rehab funding on multi-family residences. Should we reach out to realtors so they can promote the program to potential buyers? Send your ideas to Justin Malley and Dawn Leger.

D. Centre Square Infrastructure

Justin reported that the initial funding for infrastructure projects on Centre Sq., including design and build of Hope St. and the design and build of the streetscape on Riverside Avenue, is getting low. We would like to complete the Main Street streetscape after the parcel 10 construction is complete. There

are some small pieces to do (the walkway and entrance to the walkway) and have funds for the design work but not for construction of the entryway which will include an arch. There is the potential of accessing funds through the American Rescue Plan. The Mayor can provide additional information.

Ray provided some additional information. The gateway was bid as an alternate to Riverside Avenue work so they have some figures available on that work. The entrance would be similar to the entrance at Rockwell Park along with a brick paved path. The cost is estimated to be about \$100,000. Including the streetscape improvements across from lot 10 the total combined would be around \$280,000. Justin reported that a list of projects and cost estimates can be provided next month. For example, some streetscape work is planned for in front of the Carrier development at the northern part of the street. Public Works already has the funding for the engineering for this. Maintenance of common areas was discussed, e.g., planters, brickwork. Sponsorship was suggested, as well as addressing taking maintenance ownership to the adjoining businesses.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu joined the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Justin reported that additionally a decorative security fence along the walkway to deter people from coming down from the tracks is planned and Carrier has asked about potential screening options.

C. American Rescue Plan – Economic Development

The Mayor reported that we are to receive 17 million over the next 2 years. The initial half is expected within the next 6 weeks with the second portion at this time next year. We have broad categories where the funds may be invested: water, sewer, broadband, infrastructure, are the areas where they want us to invest.

Additionally there are 2 other areas of interest to this board. One is economic aid and recovery and in what manner this will take place will be a policy issue for this board. Before moving on this, however, she would like some guidance from the Department of the Treasury because there are other issues to be considered. We want to ensure whatever the funds are used for are allowable expenses and can be reimbursed so some guidance is needed from the Rescue Plan before decisions are made. The other area is “non-profit partnerships” but at this point in time what this means is somewhat unclear.

In addition, we have 5.4 million from the State that we would like to use for some capital projects. 2.7 is to be used for CARES Act criteria which is COVID mitigation. The other 2.7 can be used for anything. Additional emergency response funds through the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund) (\$8 million) are being received through the school system over 2 years.

The American Rescue Plan also has a county allocation and we do not yet know the amount that could be allocated to Bristol out of the 173 million allocated to Hartford County.

All these funds must be allocated and spent by the summer of 2024.

E. Project Status Updates – There were no updates this month.

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. Any Other Business

A. CDBG Policy Committee Update

The second public hearing was held last Monday. There was a number of attendees. We are now in the Public Comment period. The recommendations will come to the board next month and then they will be forwarded to Council.

Dawn Leger reported that the CAPER is available online for Year 45. This will be due to HUD in June. The residential rehab program is very busy but not so much on the multiple unit homes but that is because they have to be owner occupied for at least 6 months. Dawn has the list of proposed allocations.

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Hick. All present voted in favor and the report was accepted.

B. Industrial Committee Update

The Industrial Committee met at 4:30 today to address a couple of technical issues. The City may possibly be keeping the ownership of the wetlands and water storage areas in the Southeast Bristol Business Park. This was brought to us by Bob Desmarais who inquired about it as it relates to the property he is purchasing. So the Committee made a motion to re-subdivide these areas.

Council Member Preleski mentioned that Mr. Rogozinski said this is the way he would prefer to proceed. Benefits versus risks were discussed as well as costs.

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion to accept the report seconded by Commissioner Zammett. All present voted in favor and the report was accepted.

C. City Council Member Report

Council Member Preleski spoke about the growth of the grand list this past year. The department heads worked hard this year to create the budget. The work that this board has done on Economic Development has been critical. Commissioner Schmelder commented that even during COVID the businesses are still coming to Bristol.

Council Member Preleski reported that the Memorial Boulevard Magnet School is on time and under budget. The windows are going in. There was a Community Forum on March 25 and the slides are available online.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu reported that ESPN will open up the North Campus for mass vaccinations on Monday. The goal is to accelerate the Bristol vaccination rate.

She also provided an update on the Foodies and Baskets operations. There is a new party interested in the space.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Cyr made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. Meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Cooper,
Recording Secretary