

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 6, 2023 5:00pm
City Hall West Meeting Room #1

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Goldwasser. Dr. Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator and Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Nielsen, Marketing and PR Specialist, Sharon Arsego, Sr. Admin. Assistant

GUESTS: Charlie Talmadge and Gino Carrier from the Carrier Company
Dave Preleski, Treasurer - City of Bristol
Eduardo Garces, Café Real, Bristol

I. **Call to Order**

Mayor Caggiano began the meeting at 5:00PM and led the room in The Pledge of Allegiance. The mayor asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves with a couple new guests in the audience.

II. **Public Participation**

Justin Malley introduced Eduardo Garces from Café Real, 156 School St, Bristol. Mr. Garces provided a letter to the Board which was included in the Communications piece for this meeting. He raised concerns about the road renovation project at Routes 69 and 72 and its effect on his business's traffic flow. He has a new location rented that needs to be built out to provide a backup plan for them during the renovation. Mayor Caggiano expressed his appreciation for Café Real's contribution to the city with notification of the small business loan plan that has been in development as part of the Incentives Program. The mayor expressed the loan program is being designed as small business friendly and may be suited to assist with Café Real's needs.

There was no other public participation.

III. **Minutes: March 2, 2023**

Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to approve the minutes from March 2, 2023. Commissioner Schmelder put the motion forward and it was seconded by Commissioner Mills. No comments or changes were requested. All were in favor and the minutes were approved into the record.

IV. **Consent Agenda**

A. **Communications**

B. **Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report**

Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Schmelder put the motion forward and it was seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. No comments or changes were requested. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was approved into the record.

V. New Business

A. Enterprise Zone Request

Justin Malley asked to begin with **Item B.** to accommodate the pending arrival of Gino Carrier of the Carrier Company to participate in Item A.

B. Incentives Update

Justin Malley and Dave Preleski presented an update on the potential Revolving Loan Program with a drafted set of guidelines and an online fillable application draft provided for the Board's review. The Revolving Loan Program could potentially make the current business assistance process be less cumbersome for the ECD staff while streamlining the overall process with greater efficiency. Discussion included the loans providing incentives for businesses to make on time payments, payments which would pay back the city where the grants right now are awarded with no funds coming back to the city.

The bankers are providing helpful process details and the loan program could effectively replace several grant programs currently in use. Additional goals are to make the program more sustainable while keeping the program responsible. Sharing risk and servicing fees to the partner were also discussed. It was clarified that the Board's input is welcome and needed and the program is still in development. Commissioners Hick, Mills, Schmelder, Massarelli and Council Member Panioto requested clarification and offered feedback on some points immediately discussed.

Mayor Caggiano asked the Board to take this program under review and provide comments and questions to Justin Malley directly. Justin Malley asked if the Board would approve a motion to allocate funds to the program which would allow the ECD to get documented service details from RFPs without any of them being contracted yet. The Board's approval would allow \$750,000.00 in surplus funds from budget year 2022 awarded to ECD from the Comptroller's office to be allocated to this program. The further possibility of a workshop with the Board and ECD was discussed as a means of dedicated time and space to work out the program details together.

Commissioner Schmelder read the following motion:

To utilize \$750,000 in Fiscal Year 2022 General Fund Surplus funds earmarked for Economic and Community Development purposes to fund a new account for Revolving Loan Program and associated operating costs associated with hiring a loan servicing vendor for the Revolving Loan Program.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick with no further discussion or questions and all were in favor. The motion was entered into the record and Justin Malley expressed his thanks to the Board.

A. Enterprise Zone Request

Justin Malley introduced the topic and Gino Carrier and Charlie Talmadge asked for the opportunity to apply for tax abatement on the value of the Centre Square property for the first three years during construction. Charlie Talmadge reminded the Board that the project merges four lots into two with construction of Phase I will take 18 to 24

months. The proposed motion is the same as for the Funck and Eagle building a few months ago.

For purposes of the meeting, Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to waive the reading of the entire motion but that it would be in the Minutes for the record. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller and approved.

Commissioner Schmelder then made the motion to accept the Enterprise Zone Discussion: "Centre Square Village" motion as follows:

Whereas, the properties known as Parcels 5, 6, 7 and 8 area +/- 4.39 acres as indicated on the resubdivision map *Centre Square Resubdivision* dated June 5, 2017 by Milone and MacBroom (collectively known as "Centre Square Village Site") are located within the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone established by the City of Bristol and State of Connecticut;

Whereas, Carrier Construction, Inc., or its assigns to be majority controlled by Carrier Construction, Inc., intends to purchase the Centre Square Village Site with the intention of converting the vacant Centre Square Village Site into approximately 104 market-rate apartment living units and approximately 15,600 square feet of ground-level commercial space;

Whereas, the Centre Square Village Site will be constructed in two Phases as indicated on the site plan maps known as *Layout Plan #7* and *Layout Plan #8* dated December 13, 2022 by Robert Green Associates, LLC. Phase I includes one mixed use building featuring 52 apartment living units, approximately 7,800 square feet of ground level commercial space, and associated parking area. Phase II includes a mixed use building featuring 52 apartment living units, approximately 7,800 square feet of ground level commercial space, and associated parking area;

Whereas, per Article XIV, Section 18-200, of the City of Bristol Code of Ordinances, assessments on multifamily residential/commercial real property within the Enterprise Zone which is improved to the extent of \$20,000 per unit or complete retrofit of the apartments, whichever is less, with all units being upgraded, are eligible to be fixed for a period of seven (7) years from the time of such improvement and shall defer any increase in assessment attributable to such improvements according to the following schedule: Year 1 (100% deferral), Year 2 (100% deferral), Year 3 (50% deferral), Year 4 (40% deferral), Year 5 (30% deferral), Year 6 (20% deferral), Year 7 (10% deferral).

In addition, per Article XIV, Section 18-203(g) any owner of real property who agrees to rehabilitate such property or construct new multi-family rented housing or cooperative housing on such property located in the rehabilitation area herein designated may, in accordance with provisions of Section 12-65e of General Statutes, make application to the city for an agreement to fix the assessment on the property, during the period not to exceed three (3) years of rehabilitation or construction and

for a deferral of any increase in assessment attributable to such rehabilitation or construction.

I hereby make a motion: Under the guidelines of Article XIV of the City of Bristol Code of Ordinances, and pending the legal acquisition of the subject properties by Carrier Construction, Inc. or its assigns to be majority controlled by Carrier Construction, Inc. for purposes of converting the subject properties to multifamily mixed-use housing featuring approximately 104 apartment living units and approximately 15,600 square feet of ground-level commercial space to approve the following Enterprise Zone tax abatement schedule for Phase I and Phase II of the Centre Square Village Site:

Phase I:

Construction Year #1: 100% real property abatement
Construction Year #2 (if needed): 100% real property abatement
Construction Year #3: (if needed): 100% real property abatement

Year #1 (period to begin following issuance of a certificate of occupancy for Phase I): 100% real property abatement attributable to property improvements
Year #2: 100% real property abatement
Year #3: 50% real property abatement
Year #4: 40% real property abatement
Year #5: 30% real property abatement
Year #6: 20% real property abatement
Year #7: 10% real property abatement

Phase II:

Construction Year #1: 100% real property abatement
Construction Year #2 (if required): 100% real property abatement
Construction Year #3 (if required): 100% real property abatement

Year #1 (period to begin following issuance of a certificate of occupancy for Phase II): 100% real property abatement attributable to property improvements
Year #2: 100% real property abatement
Year #3: 50% real property abatement
Year #4: 40% real property abatement
Year #5: 30% real property abatement
Year #6: 20% real property abatement
Year #7: 10% real property abatement

Note that the subject properties representing Phase I and Phase II will be taxed in full prior to construction Commencing on said parcels. This means Phase II will be taxed at 100% prior to construction.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick with no additional comments or questions. All present were in favor with discussion about the parking garage availability and completion. The motion then passed into the Record.

C. Downtown Update

Justin Malley spoke to the Hope Street parking garage which the city was awarded \$5.2M through ARPA to build. Construction costs are trending higher. Justin Malley and Mayor Caggiano are meeting with the ARPA Committee Monday to request additional funds to complete the garage.

Dawn Nielsen showed a drone video taken of the Wheeler Health site for construction updates. The footage will be used to update the community on the progress as well.

Justin Malley spoke to the Community Investment Fund Grant (CIF) for \$6.85M was approved for the city. Justin thanked Dr. Dawn Leger for her diligence in writing the grant which led to the approval. Mayor Caggiano added that we received the full amount that we requested. The funding is for streetscape improvements for the Riverside Avenue. The mayor spoke to the State presenting an idea for a Route 72 improvement near Brackett Park.

The mayor also provided an update on BristolWORKS! opening class enrollment which includes an over enrollment for Childhood Education training with full classes for other categories offered.

D. ARPA Update

Mayor Caggiano and Commissioner Schmelder provided an update with the consultants being helpful with the paperwork which is cumbersome. Justin Malley advised of additional interviews for the part-time ARPA assistance within City Hall.

E. BOF Requests

Mayor Caggiano requested the following BOF Transfer motion be read which was completed by Commissioner Schmelder:

To transfer \$5,139.14 from the Economic Development Expenses Account #1044109-589300 to the Farmer's Market Account #1044109-589325 to cover an overage of \$139.14 from fiscal year 2022 and to fund general Farmers Market costs for fiscal year 2023.

Commissioner Hick seconded the motion. Mayor Caggiano advised the Board the contract is completed with The Rotary Club for the management of the market for 2023. The market will continue to be held in the Bristol Health parking lot as part of the two-year agreement with Bristol Health. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

Justin Malley asked the Board to consider another BOF Transfer Request to transfer \$2,200.00 from Professional Fees to Downtown Revitalization to provide the annual flowers for the Main Street and West End areas. Dave Hamelin will tend to the West End flowers as he has done in previous years. Justin's been advised that planters will be moved to a previously agreed upon location if needed during the road construction. Businesses will be reminded to care for all the flowers as well.

Commissioner Schmelder made the motion to approve the transfer request which was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion was passed into the record.

F. All Heart Website Update

Dawn Nielsen updated the Board that a review of the current website content has been completed with content having been pared down. It's been submitted to the website creators and the next update to the Board will be at the June Board Meeting.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

There was no new business from the Commissioners.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Mills asked for an update on the Rockwell Theater on Memorial Boulevard. Mayor Caggiano reported that the part-time position with Arts and Culture remains open and the programs being held by the school at the theater need to be better communicated. Along with Mayor Caggiano, Commissioners Mills, Schmelder and Hick encouraged the public to be made aware of the situation of with the theatre and the need for it to be used more often. Mayor Caggiano suggested people attend the next Board of Education meeting to show their support for more public access to theater. Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at 7PM and the mayor encouraged a report back to the Board from all who attend the next Board of Education meeting.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. City Council Member Report

Commissioner Panioto reminded the Board of a Conflict of Interest form he had requested be completed and sent to him in reply.

B. CDBG Policy Committee

Justin Malley reported for Dawn Leger who was absent from the meeting that the Committee has met and made initial recommendations. They are within the 30-day comment period and will be back with a more detailed update at the May 2023 Board Meeting.

Mayor Caggiano made a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss the Downtown Grant Application. All were in favor and the Board moved into Executive Session at 6:06PM.

IX. Executive Session

A. Downtown Grant Application

Mayor Caggiano noted there were no votes taken during Executive Session and requested a motion to come out of Executive Session. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Massarelli. The motion was approved and Executive Session ended at 6:24PM.

Commissioner Schmelder read the following motion in response to the Executive Session:

To approve a Downtown Grant of up to \$34,965 – representing a 50% match of a total project cost of \$61,930.49 and up to \$4,000 for the addition of four full-time positions to its payroll – to First Impressions on Main, LLC for building improvements associated with conversion of a vacant space into a full-service hair salon and to refer to the Board of Finance for information. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mills and unanimously approved by the Board. The motion was approved into the record and the grant was awarded.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Mills motioned for the meeting to adjourn and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:35PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary