

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES March 25, 2009

Present:

Commissioners: Genevieve Salvatore, Chair,
Susan Ashelford, John DePalma, Tessa Marquis,
Susan Patrick, Cyrus Settineri, and Robert Stanton

Advisors: Kathleen Alagno and Robert Gregory

Press: Frank Juliano, CT Post

- I. Chair Salvatore called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. A roll call indicated the members present as indicated above.
- II. The minutes of the meeting of February 25, 2009, were approved with the correction of time of adjournment amended from 9:28 p.m. to 9:28 a.m.
- III. Economic Development Monthly Report

Mr. Gregory presented his report. In addition to the report on page 3, he said that Retail Services Associates had closed at 500 Bic Drive. 250 jobs full and part time jobs were lost.

- IV. Old Business

A. Kimball Report Letter

Chair Salvatore said that she made the decision not to send a letter supporting the Kimball Report but did speak at the Board of Aldermen meeting. In light of the decision of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen to appoint a Committee to implement the report she would hope that we could have the representative of the Committee or the Mayor give a progress report to the EDC. The Chair charged Mr. Settineri with the task of keeping track of the progress of the Kimball Report Committee.

Ms. Salvatore would also like the Mayor to give a report on Stimulus funds. Discussion was held on possible projects that might be funded by ARRA funds.

Discussion was held regarding a number of projects including the Silver Sands/Walnut Beach Boardwalk. Chair Salvatore asked Ms. Patrick to follow and report on progress of the Boardwalk.

B. Discussion of Possible Activities

1. Blighted Building Ordinance

Ms. Patrick reported that she had contacted BOA Chair Ben Blake to see what the problems were with the previous Anti-Blight Ordinance attempt. He indicated that at the time it was not seen as a priority. She was interested in expanding the scope to include property maintenance, i.e. beautification of vacant buildings and space. Ms. Patrick has some sample ordinances and will obtain more. CCM and Connecticut Main Street were possible sources of sample regulations.

Chair Salvatore designated Ms. Patrick as the Chair of the Anti-Blight Committee. Mr. Settineri, Mr. DePalma and Mr. Stanton agreed to serve on the Committee.

2. Business Visitation

Ms. Marquis referred the Committee to the proposal included in the agenda package. The target group would be light and small manufacturing businesses. The concept would be to survey businesses already located here to find out issues and constraints to growing their business. Then we would follow-up seeking resources to address those issues. This subcommittee will be called the Manufacturing Outreach Project.

Discussion was held on legislative issues affecting business at the state level.

A motion was made and seconded to structure the meeting as follows: 8-9 a.m. business meeting and from 9 a.m. on a guest speaker if invited.

An amendment to have speakers invited by the chairs of the sub-committees failed for lack of a second.

The original motion passed by a vote of 6-1.

Mr. DePalma volunteered to contact Mr. Bergami as a speaker.

3. Shop Local Campaign

Ms. Ashelford was designated as Chair and said she was in the early stages of putting a plan together.

Ms. Salvatore, Ms. Patrick and Ms. Alagno said they would work on this project. Discussion was held regarding a promotional campaign.

4. Development of a Strategic Plan

Chair Salvatore said she wanted to divide our economic development approach into micro and macro parts. The macro approach would look at the longer-range picture.

Ms. Alagno and Mr. DePalma volunteered to serve with Ms. Salvatore.

V. New Business

Concern was expressed about the new conference center. After the meeting it was determined that it had passed Planning & Zoning.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert B. Gregory