

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Minutes of the Meeting of

April 23, 2008

PRESENT

Members: Chairman Robert Kapusta, Vice-Chairman John DePalma, Kathy Alagno, Robert Gregory, Tessa Marquis, Peter Spalthoff, David Sulkis

Guests: Paul Austin – Chairman, Sewer Commission
Bob Brinton – City Engineer
Ray Macaluso – Westcott & Mapes
Ken Bradstreet – Earth Tech

Press: Frank Juliano – CT Post, Brian McCready – New Haven Register

I. Call to Order

Chairman Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of March 26, 2008 as distributed.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

III. Standing Reports

- A. Milford Chamber of Commerce – Ms. Alagno said she was a delegate to the Discover New England Conference where she met with a 21 international tour operators to tell the Milford story. The chamber created a “sell” sheet brochure which is available for other events. She encouraged other tourism businesses to attend that annual event.
- B. Milford Progress, Inc. – Mr. DePalma said that MPI had requested \$20,000 from the city to continue the sign study. MPI discussed the two crime incidents and the proactive actions taken to address the situation.
- C. Downtown Milford Business Association – Ms. Alagno said that DMBA will be having a crime prevention workshop and the Milford Police Dept will be setting up a phone hotline. Discussions will be held with the city regarding increased police presence downtown.

Ms Marquis reminded the commission about the upcoming events of the DMBA including the Pirate Ball and the Open Doors arts event. DMBA also expressed concern about empty buildings and vacant lots and is taking action to mask their negative appearance.

D. Real Estate Trends & Developments – Mr. Spalthoff said that for the first time he has been reporting Milford has felt the impact of the housing crisis. Sales and median price were down. More expensive homes are still selling. Homes are still selling but not at the pace or price that they were previously. Discussion was held on the importance of mass transportation available to housing.

E. Building Permit Task Force – No Report

IV. Devon, Downtown & General Economic Activity – Mr. Gregory noted the grand openings of Lowe's and Pilgrim Furniture City. He also said the recent lease of 40,000sf at 38 Wellington Road to the state DCF was good for the office market. A correction was noted in that Why Not? is taking the Broad Street space formerly occupied by Lillith's Loom not the corner building.

V. Items & Matters of Continuing Interest 1

A. Devon Revitalization Program – Mr. Gregory said that Phase III was waiting for DOT review before it goes out to bid. He is still hopeful that it can be finished this year.

B. Walnut Beach Redevelopment – Mr. Gregory said that necessary paperwork is being processed. A resolution accepting the grant at the next Board of Alderman meeting is required.

C. Correspondence – None

E. Proposed Courthouse Expansion/Milford Post Office/Downtown Parking Structure – Mr. Kapusta noted that the governor has decided to exercise the state option to own the courthouse building. Ms. Marquis inquired about the status of the parking structure for commuter parking. It was noted that DOT would be involved and the city will advocate for that solution based on the study that was done. Ms. Alagno said the Downtown Parking Task Force would be reconvened.

E. Eisenhower Park – No Report. Mr. Kapusta suggested removing this item from the agenda as there seems to be no further action at this time. The commission did not object.

F. Welcome Letter to New Businesses – Mr. Kapusta will forward Mr. Spalthoff's draft letter to the mayor's office. The letter would be a joint venture of the EDC and the mayor.

G. Status of Signage Regulations – Wayfinding Signs – Ms. Alagno said that MPI will join with all segments of the community to unite all in a sign study that will incorporate all with each area having its own identity.

H. Available Business Sites – CERC listings are included in the package.

I. Business Visitation Program – Mr. Gregory said that a list of businesses has been developed; a draft letter prepared and visit will begin shortly. He will notify the commission when visits are scheduled.

VI. Old Business – Ms. Marquis requested a report from the newly appointed Milford members of the Sikorsky Airport Study group. The chair noted that one would be requested.

VII. New Business – Ms. Marquis said that she had attended the Stratford Economic Development Commission meeting and they were preparing a brochure. After discussion with Mr. Gregory, she felt that Milford did not need a brochure but a better presence on the web. After discussion, a motion was made to have a letter by sent to the mayor requesting a method for expanding and enhancing the web presence of the Economic Development Department including images and links to various appropriate web sites.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

VIII. Guest Speakers – Paul Austin – Chairman, Sewer Commission; Bob Brinton, City Engineer; Ray Macaluso, Westcott & Mapes; Ken Bradstreet, Earth Tech.

Mr. Austin described the organization of the Sewer Commission, its relationship to city agencies and the structure of the sewer system. Current \$64 million upgrades to both plants are to improve nitrogen removal, improve outdated equipment and achieve some additional capacity. Several pump stations need upgrades or replacements.

Mr. Brinton said that procedures have been improved. A copy of the new policies was presented to the commission. A \$100 million in construction projects is on the drawing boards with design provided by consulting firms. In response to a question about funding, Mr. Austin replied that there is funding provided by grants and loans from DEP.

Mr. Macaluso explained that Westcott & Mapes serve as consultants to the Sewer Commission and the mayor. An emergency situation arose two years ago on West Street. The pipe had disintegrated. Approval was granted for immediate repair.

The sewer capacity and sewer flows are based on the City Plan of Development. That determines the gallonage per acre. Mr. Sulkis questioned why he has to send an applicant to the Engineering Department to determine whether there is sufficient capacity. Mr. Austin said that the Sewer Commission wants to work with Planning and Zoning and the EDC to improve the process. They welcome input but must deal with the capacity, as it exists. Ms. Marquis said that coordination between the three groups could lead to better planned development.

When questioned about increasing the capacity, Mr. Bradstreet said that there would be some increased capacity as infiltration of water is eliminated from the system. Mr. Macaluso said that improvements to increase capacity are in the capital improvement plan but emergency projects have taken precedence. For example, the pipeline across the Indian River had 18 manholes that allowed river water to enter the system. By eliminating the problem the capacity was increased.

Mr. Austin said that the Sewer Commission has increased capacity in various areas including downtown, Devon and Walnut Beach. They are willing to look at other areas. There is a problem with big restaurants going on small sites. Mr. Macaluso cited the Prospect Street scenario where the Sewer Commission changed the capacity to accommodate development. Austin said they did the same thing in Devon.

Mr. Austin said that "FOG"; fats, oils and grease from restaurants were major problems for the system. The City has an active program to get grease traps into restaurants that predate the current requirements. He has formed a committee to monitor existing grease traps. Austin is looking funding for a part-time employee to enforce the regulations.

The area of the Boston Post Road from High Street to West Ave was discussed. Representatives from the Sewer Commission said they would look at any proposal for property along that corridor and see if it could be accommodated. There would have to be a request from the Sewer Commission for funding for a study. Funding could come from the City or the developer.

Mr. Macaluso said that the East Broadway pump station was being replaced.

Mr. Bradstreet said that the system is being upgraded. He outlined the improvements at the two treatment plants. Any major increase in capacity beyond 20 years would require a new plant.

A motion was made to form a subcommittee to look at various sections of town that need upgrading and establish priorities.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Alagno will be chair of the subcommittee. Mr. Sulkis and Mr. Depalma will serve on the subcommittee.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Gregory