

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of May 28, 2008**

#### **PRESENT**

Members: Chairman Robert Kapusta, Kathy Alagno, Robert Gregory,  
Tessa Marquis, Cyrus Settineri, Bob Stanton

Press: Frank Juliano – CT Post, Jim Tinley – New Haven Register

#### **NOT PRESENT**

John DePalma, Ken Brannin, Peter Spalthoff

#### **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of April 23, 2008 as distributed.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

#### **III. Standing Reports**

- A. Milford Chamber of Commerce – Ms. Alagno stated that she attended the Tourism Summit and met with about 21 International Tour Operators. A sell sheet brochure was created by the Chamber to be used at that particular event. The sell sheet will be distributed to the different hotels and restaurants in the area to be used for tourists when they come into Milford.

The Chamber sent out a letter to all of the hotels, restaurants, and the downtown merchants with the contact information for particular tour operators so they can contact them on their own. Ms. Alagno also suggested to the DMBA to do a follow-up by contacting a local tourism company here in Milford who would then contact the receptive tour operatives. When the tourists come in from England, Ireland, etc. they would come to the local tour operator who could set up day trips to Milford. Many different possibilities are being explored because this is new territory for everyone.

Conversations are on going with one of the larger tour operators. This is a very long-term project.

The Chamber is also planning the Bic Golf Classic that will take place on July 14 at Mill River Country Club.

The Chamber was involved in the Business Showcase, held at Sacred Heart University, with about 145 businesses participating. About 2,000 people attended. The Stratford Economic Development Commission had a booth. Ms. Alagno commented that she was able to meet and speak with Bruce Alessie and she will be going to visit them soon.

Westfield Mall on July 2<sup>nd</sup> will be sponsoring fireworks for the second time. They are doubling their efforts this year. There will be a carnival that will take place on the grounds during the day and the top deck of the parking garage will have food booths. The Chamber is doing a business section where they will be selling booths for businesses to come out and display or actually sell products. They expect to have 30,000 people this year. The theme this year is all about veterans. Also Josh Gracion who was one of the runner's up of American Idol will be a headline singer who will be performing that night for entertainment. The Chamber's trust is selling raffle tickets and they have created a veteran's scholarship fund whereby any monies that come from the sale of these tickets go into a fund directly for scholarships for veterans or children going onto higher education.

- B. Milford Progress, Inc. – Ms. Alagno stated that MPI did some follow-up on the signage study and there will be a meeting in the next week or two with the Mayor and some department heads to iron out any discrepancies. Then it will go to Planning and Zoning for a public hearing and possible action.

MPI is working with Devon, Woodmont and Walnut Beach for a citywide approach on the wayfinding portion of the project. MPI received a grant from the City for \$13,500 to be used towards the signage project that will be combined with monies from Devon Revitalization.

The Wave shuttle will be running this summer during the weekends and the hours are different this year – Friday's from 5 p.m. until 10 p.m. and on Saturday's 1 p.m. until 10 p.m. from the July 4 weekend and through Labor Day weekend.

- C. Downtown Milford Business Association – Ms. Alagno commented that the DMBA has been very busy working on the Friday night at the Oyster Festival and they are looking to do different things this year. They are doing the Pirate's Ball, which is June 13<sup>th</sup> and it is \$75 a ticket. The Chamber Concerts start the same night. The movies on the green start on Saturday, May 31. The Open Doors project this year will be benefiting Bridges and starts later on in the season.

- D. Real Estate Trends & Developments – No Report

- E. Building Permit Task Force – Mr. Settineri commented that in January the Mayor was present at the EDC meeting and outlined his plan for continued improvement in the Building Department. It has been a hectic

time with the budget meetings but none of what the Mayor outlined has been accomplished and Mr. Settineri has had many conversations with the Mayor regarding this issue.

Mr. Settineri is asking the Commission to send the Mayor a letter urging him to follow-up on what he had planned out with the Commission in January, which included a Commission to oversee the Building Department, bringing in a consultant to review their activities and bringing in customer relations training for several departments. Mr. Settineri made a motion to send a letter to the Mayor urging him to follow-up with the above listed items. Seconded by Tessa Marquis.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

- IV. Devon, Downtown & General Economic Activity** – Mr. Gregory referred the Commission to his report. Tessa Marquis mentioned that she just got word that Words To Grow On is going to officially announce that they are moving to Broad Street. They are moving to the former location of Lillith's Loom. Palermo's is officially closed. Smith Craft chose not to exercise their option for Harrison's.

**V. Items & Matters of Continuing Interest**

- A. Devon Revitalization Program – Mr. Gregory stated that they have had extremely good discussions with DOT. The consultant seems to think that everything can be put together and they can go out to bid in a couple of weeks. The DOT had a number of issues that Mr. Gregory believes can be resolved without too many problems.
- B. Walnut Beach Redevelopment – Mr. Gregory stated that the Board of Aldermen did approve the resolution for the \$1 million grant. Now it goes through the legal process that should take a couple of months before they actually are able to get the money to spend. The amount is \$1 million, which will go for improvements to the beach infrastructure, streetscape, and continuation of Stowe Farm development. It was noted that the Walnut Beach Creamery is open for the summer.

Mr. Kapusta noted that because of the nesting of the Piping Plover the boardwalk from Silver Sands had to be relocated.

- C. Correspondence – A copy of a letter to the Mayor regarding Website was noted.
- D. Proposed Courthouse Expansion/Milford Post Office/Downtown Parking Structure – Mr. Gregory and Mr. Kapusta stated that it is in the State's hands and there is money allocated for this project. The Governor has indicated that she is fully in support of the expansion project.

- 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. Gregory stated that the first letters are going out today and will go out on a regular basis. Mr. Gregory is working with the Chamber to develop a list of new businesses. Mr. Gregory asked the Commission to keep him informed about any new business.
- G. Status of Signage Regulations – Wayfinding Signs – Report was already given above.
- H. Available Business Sites – CERC listings are included in the package. Mr. Gregory attended the Annual CERC Sitefinder event. As a featured speaker they had Herb Hauser from Midtown Properties who is developing Steel Point in Bridgeport. They are planning to produce about 15% of their own energy as part of the whole project through wind, solar, and water (hydro power). The idea of creating green buildings is not only a good thing for a number of reasons but young people want to work in green buildings and live in green environments.
- I. Business Visitation Program – Mr. Gregory said that a list of businesses has been developed and they will start sending out letters the first week in June. A list will be sent to the Commission and if anyone wants to participate let Mr. Gregory know. There are 25 businesses listed and we will send out about five a week. U.I. will then set up the appointments.

**VI. Old Business** – Tessa Marquis requested the report from the airport committee representatives in Stratford. Mr. Gregory stated that he did not contact them yet but he will follow-up for the next meeting.

**VII. New Business** – Tessa Marquis said that the open space committee has been working with the local farmers and there are actually about ten not counting fishing farmers. They have a grant from the State and they have put together a brochure of the local farmers so that people could actually visit the farms. Besides the farmer's market downtown on Saturday, there will be a farmer's market at Treat farm during the week.

**VIII. Guest Speaker** – Chairman Kapusta mentioned that Dick Austin was unable to attend today's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna E. Holden