

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of August 28, 2013

Present: Commissioners: Robert Kapusta, Chairman, John O'Neil, Vice Chair, John DePalma, Victor Ferrante, Greg Harla, and Michael Lynch

Thomas Ivers – Acting Director

Guest: Joseph Griffith – Director, Permitting and Land Use

Absent: Commissioner Suzanne Cahill and Advisor Kathy Alagno

Public: Lou D'Amato and Ray Oliver

- I. Call to Order - Mr. Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.
- II. Minutes – A motion was made by John O'Neil and seconded by Michael Lynch to approve the minutes of July 24, 2013, as presented.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

- III. Chairman's Report – Mr. Kapusta, as he has done in the past and as a general rule, met with the Mayor regarding the agenda and it was decided that Dr. Feser will be invited to be the next Guest Speaker and to review the Mastery Test scores on September 25. In addition to the speaker, the Mayor mentioned that the EDC should have a parking regulation person to handle the downtown parking regulations and to serve as liaison to the P&Z board as a sub-committee dealing with the review of the regulations. Mr. Kapusta suggested appointing John O'Neil to give a monthly report and the Mayor agreed. The Mayor also mentioned to Chair Kapusta that the Chamber of Commerce has a restaurant week coming up October 7 through October 13. Ms. Alagno was not present at the meeting but Chair Kapusta said she indicated that there are 20 restaurants giving featured type issues and special discounts during the particular week. There was no objection to the appointment and the Chair declared John O'Neil so appointed, in accordance with the Mayor's suggestion and the commission consensus.
- IV. Public Comments – None
- V. Correspondence – Mr. Ivers stated that there was one letter to Michael Lynch regarding his appointment to the EDC and Chair Kapusta acknowledged and formerly welcomed Mr. Lynch to the committee.

- VI. Economic Development Activity – Mr. Ivers stated that he followed the format that Bob Gregory used in the past for this report. He discussed the labor statistics briefly and he included recent actions taken by the P&Z board regarding business enterprises expanding or getting established. Mr. Ivers also discussed articles that were attached to the report.
- VII. Guest Speaker – Chair Kapusta discussed Mr. Griffith's background briefly. He stated that Mr. Griffith comes to Milford after eight years as Building Inspector for the University of Connecticut which started in the year 2005. Prior to this position, Mr. Griffith worked 25 years as an architect first as a sole proprietor for an office in Deep River for 19 years and then for Hazel Foods Associates in New Britain.

Mr. Griffith stated that he started back in 1980 as an architect. Prior to 1980 he worked for his Dad who is a residential contractor in Westport through his High School and College years. He stated as an architect that he is trained in problem solving. For the past eight years Mr. Griffith was the building inspector for the University of Connecticut. In 1995 the Connecticut legislature created the UCONN 2000 initiative. They took \$2 billion over the coming ten years and stated that they were going to make the campus top notch. UCONN did not want to go through Public Works so they set up an alternative program in which UCONN was responsible for the projects and also the code enforcement. In 2005 Mr. Griffith was in a private practice and he read that the dormitories were in serious violation at UCONN. Mr. Griffith was hired as the supervising building official and UCONN was under scrutiny and pressure about code compliance. A discussion continued regarding this initiative at UCONN.

Mr. Griffith was hired here in June, 2013 in the Permitting and Land Use Dept., he is a licensed building inspector, and just recently the Mayor appointed him as the City Building Official. He is charged with the sole responsibility of the City of Milford regarding permits, etc. It allows Mr. Griffith to implement the changes that he believes are necessary and to authorize other building inspectors to do their work. Tom Raucci is still supervisor of the Building Dept. employees. The key principle is to issue permits and referencing the specific code if the plans are not where they need to be. Another key point is that the people coming through the door are our customers and need to be treated as such. Mr. Griffith in his position is to get all of the departments to work together and a unit. A discussion continued regarding the guidelines, regulations and policy and procedures of Mr. Griffith's position.

VIII. Standing Items/Committee Reports

- A. Boardwalk Repairs – The Mayor told Mr. Kapusta that all of the boardwalk repairs are completed.
- B. Colony Grill – Mr. O’Neil spoke with Kim Martin who is one of the owners and they are extremely happy with the outcome of the opening of their business. The parking lot is jammed. Business is booming for the other businesses as well since the Colony Grill opened. There are parking issues that need to be addressed.
- C. Chamber – No Report
- D. Visitation Report – Mr. DePalma stated that he sold his business to Bob Smith and Mr. Smith is refurbishing the building.
- E. Business Analysts Online – Mr. Ivers stated that the Regional Council of Governments is developing a software package that will provide marketing data for business enterprises. A representative from the MIS department attended an orientation on this software package and it needs to be tailored and loaded for demographic information for this area and then later this fall they will make this package available to municipalities within the regional planning area and then will see more details.

IX. Old Business – None

X. New Business – None

- A. Mastery Test Results – Dr. Elizabeth Feser will be the guest speaker for the next meeting and she will discuss this topic and how it affects Milford.

XI. FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY – No Report

There being no further new business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna E. Holden