

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of September 23, 2015

Present: Commissioners: John O'Neil, Chairman, Greg Harla, Vice
Chairman, Suzanne Cahill, John DePalma, & Michael Lynch
Advisors: Kathy Alagno & Julie Nash
Absent: Victor Ferrante

I. CALL TO ORDER - Chair O'Neil called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – A motion was made by Michael Lynch and seconded by Greg Harla to make one correction and then to approve the minutes of August 26, 2015.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Chair O'Neil stated that John DePalma arranged a pre-meeting with Carl Russell and Arnold Peck to discuss their views on zoning and building permitting. The end result of this meeting was to pursue the survey of businesses and to build a strong database of information and building space available in the City of Milford. The second item that has been presented by the Mayor and Julie is to create a marketing plan for Milford.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

V. CORRESPONDENCE - None

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – Ms. Nash introduced Mark Kaminski with Vertical Marketing Group. He will be developing the marketing plan along with EDC and Community Development to focus on a strategy to better market the City of Milford. There are items that will be worked on. One item is a new billboard that will be displayed on I-95 in the spring and ads will be published in the New England Real Estate Journal. Ms. Nash stated that the business survey was sent out and the goal is to get 300 replies, which would be 10% of the businesses in Milford. Julie will send the business survey and cover letter to Kathy Alagno and Priscilla Lynn to send out to the Chamber Members and the DMBA members. Manufacturing Day will be held at Platt with a one on one with students and in the afternoon Southwestern Connecticut Manufacturing Group will be speaking

about the new apprenticeship programs that the State is creating. The Mayor will also be touring some manufacturers in the City to get an idea of what is going on in the industry and if there is anything that the City can do to help. Ms. Nash will be reaching out to the contact for the Small Business Development Center that can assist with funding. The library is unveiling their brain station, which is 3D printing and all different kinds of manufacturing tools that adults and children can use. Ms. Alagno mentioned that she has gotten involved with individuals from Housatonic Community College who started to help raise money for the two-year Manufacturing Program. The group has put in and received licensing for a National Manufacturing group, which will be located in Bridgeport. John Ratzenberger is supporting this project. Ms. Alagno has visited Alinabal and Bic to gain support for the project. This group has hosted dinners that started with 50 attendees and is now hosting a dinner at the Trumbull Marriott in the ballroom with dinners starting at \$150 a person.

- VII. GUEST SPEAKER: MARK KAMINSKI** – Mark Kaminski commented that he grew up in Milford and owned Milford Pedi Cab. Vertical Marketing Group is a whole service marketing agency and they focus on digital type work and they are a google partner. He stated that the first step is to pinpoint the marketing demographic and then to establish the reason why businesses do not come to Milford and why the businesses leave Milford and go to other towns. Chair O’Neil stated that the next steps should be starting the business survey process and concentrating on business generation. The process plan should be specific next steps on researching and gathering information and a general timeline on completing this project. Ms. Nash recommended that the EDC identify five or so businesses that have left Milford and why they decided to go to a different town. Ms. Alagno stated that she will work on coming up with this list. Mr. DePalma suggested a focus on the work pool market that is apparent in Milford. Chair O’Neil stressed the point that the EDC needs to pinpoint the target businesses and the target individuals of this project and there should not be any restrictions on this process. Ms. Nash stated that before the next meeting she will have the CERC research of the top five industries with the top incentives. A recycling taskforce has been started for businesses. Ms. Nash also mentioned that she will be attending the Step Up Conference. This is a CT Subsidized Training and Employment Program that has been refunded. Julie has researched on how to have Milford added to the attractions sign and the State has approved this request. The State wrote back and one of the items that is needed to achieve this goal is a designated Welcome Center. It needs to be open five days a week and/or a Saturday or Sunday. Julie will forward the application to Ms. Alagno and Ms. Cahill.

VIII. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. DOWNTOWN PARKING – Chair O’Neil mentioned a parking commission. Ms. Nash and Mr. Saley went to the Norwalk Parking Authority and ideas are in the process of being considered.
- B. CHAMBER – Ms. Alagno stated that Restaurant Week is starting October 5 and will run through October 11. There are 27 restaurants that are participating.
- C. PERMIT & LAND USE - FERRANTE/GRIFFITH – No Report.
- D. VISITATION REPORT – Mr. DePalma is putting together a book for the Columbus Club. He contacted 80 individuals and businesses in the City and he received 60 ads for the book. After speaking with all of these businesses, Mr. DePalma stated that only two of the businesses were having difficulty. One business was having equipment issues and the other business was having a banking problem.
- E. TOURISM – No Report.

IX. OLD BUSINESS – None.

X. NEW BUSINESS – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m. A motion was unanimously carried to finalize the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna E. Holden