

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES of the Meeting of January 27, 2021

A virtual/telephonic meeting was held via Zoom as the result of publicly declared CoVID-19 state emergency necessitating remote meetings

Commissioners Present: Michael Crowley, Chairman; Michael Lynch; Jessica Stram; Ani Chaghatzbanian; Emily Lucibello; Peter Cozzolino

Advisors present: Julie Nash; Pamela Staneski

Also present: Cassandra Schull

Absent: John DePalma; Paige Miglio

I. CALL TO ORDER – CROWLEY

Mr. Crowley called the meeting to order at 12:05pm

II. VOTING ITEMS

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS: CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Crowley nominated Ms. Chaghatzbanian for Chairman. Mr. Lynch seconded the nomination. All were in favor of the nomination. Unanimously approved.

Ms. Chaghatzbanian nominated Ms. Stram for Vice Chairman. Mr. Crowley seconded the nomination. All were in favor of the nomination. Unanimously approved.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2020 MEETING

Mr. Lynch and Mr. Cozzolino made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2020. Unanimously approved.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Mr. Crowley spoke about EDC continuing with breakout sessions and conversations with subgroups. He said he sent an article on how South Hampton is dealing with vacant storefronts.

Chairman Chaghatzbanian welcomed new Commissioner, Emily Lucibello, to the meeting and asked her to talk about her background and interests.

Ms Lucibello talked about moving her practice to Milford in 2013. Her office is downtown where she has gotten to know business owners in the area and is interested in getting involved in the community.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

V. EDC PROJECT DISCUSSION

A. MILFORD EDC CARES ACT GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW

Director Nash said she has 2 applications to vote on with several others pending. She spoke about EDC review process to see how the businesses will use the funding and to make sure they are in good standing.

Mr. Cozzolino asked about the amount and source of funding. Director Nash said it is business assistance grant from Milford CDBG Cares Act that allows funding for CoVID-

related expenses up to \$5,000. The applications ready for review were from Santec Corporation and Milford Point Brewing.

She said Milford Point Brewing has not received other funding and they are invested in the community. They plan to use the funds for rent, electric bills and to start canning operations. She recommended their application for approval and advised this Commission to make a motion for this CARES Act grant recipient.

Mr. Crowley made a motion to approve the application for Milford Point Brewing LLC. Mr. Cozzolino seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Santec Corporation is a printing manufacturer that has been in Milford for 37 years. They plan to use the funding to invest in new products and revenue streams.

Mr. Cozzolino made a motion to approve the application for Santec Corporation. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked about how businesses learn about the grant. Director Nash said she published a press release and held virtual informational sessions last week; she also sent it out in her newsletter; it is posted on social media and she asked accountants and attorneys to share with their clients. The Chamber is also sending it to their members.

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Director Nash talked about additional financial assistance programs for EIDL, PPP, CT Manufacturers Innovation Fund and Shared Work program.

She reported on unemployment data and compared current unemployment claims to prior years. She said some industries are doing well while job losses continue in certain industries such as leisure and hospitality.

She presented new business data for 2020 and showed new business starts exceeded 2019 numbers; she attributed the growth to an increase in migration to Milford.

She commented on the recovery of the economy in 2021 due to vaccine roll out and increased confidence in the stock market. She said the Keep the Cheer Here shop-local campaign was the best holiday weekend that shops had in 4 years; the Mall also did well over the holidays. Chairman Chaghatzbanian asked about hosting a similar event in the spring.

Director Nash talked about interest from restaurants to extend outdoor dining permits; she is writing a letter of support to Planning and Zoning. She has been hosting weekly speaker series called "Conversations with Colleagues" where different people discuss topics and address questions she is often asked. She is also meeting with Milford Police to revisit Bird Scooters; Bird plans to hire a fleet manager to address concerns from the police department; Mr. Cozzolino offered to help.

VII. STANDING ITEMS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. TOURISM

Director Nash said she has a call into the Health Department to discuss plans for the spring, but they are busy with their vaccine programs.

B. CHAMBER

Ms Staneski commented on the CARES Act application; she said there is a need for the funding, and they continue to spread the word to businesses. They are also starting a certification program to meet gaps in the workforce.

She spoke about their new location and hosting Lunch and Learns. She said the Chamber continues their support for shopping local and are hosting several events: Traveling Tuesdays, Wellness Wednesdays, and the annual meeting on February 10th with awards and a video celebrating the community.

She said The Chamber had 47 new members in 2020 and 6 new so far in January. She talked about new staff and changes in the Board to reflect diversity in industries and the business community.

C. REOPEN MILFORD ADVISORY GROUP

Director Nash said she is still talking to restaurants, but other industries are doing well.

D. PERMIT & LAND USE

Chairman Chaghatzbanian said she will reach out to Joe for an update.

E. VISITATION REPORTS – None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cozzolino asked about the Chamber building; Director Nash said the RFI is on hold.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

The next regular meeting will be held on February 24, 2021

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02pm. A motion was unanimously carried to finalize the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Diamond
Recorder