

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of February 27, 2013

Present: Commissioners: Suzanne Cahill, John DePalma, Victor Ferrante, Robert Kapusta, John O'Neil, Cyrus Settineri and Robert Stanton

Robert Gregory, Advisor

Absent: Advisor Kathy Alagno

I. Mr. Gregory called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

II. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mr. Gregory opened the floor for nominations.

Mr. O'Neil nominated Mr. Settineri, seconded by Ms. Cahill.

Mr. Stanton nominated Mr. Kapusta, seconded by Mr. DePalma.

Mr. Kapusta and Mr. Settineri made statements regarding their candidacy.

Mr. Kapusta was elected by secret ballot by a vote of 4-3.

Mr. Kapusta assumed the Chair and called for nominations for Vice Chair.

Mr. Settineri nominated Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Ferrante.

A motion was made to close nominations and have the Chair cast one ballot for Mr. O'Neil. Mr. Stanton seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. The minutes of the January 23, 2013, meeting were approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comments – None

V. Economic Development Activity

Mr. Gregory presented his report as attached to the minutes.

VI. Guest Speaker: Supt. Dr. Elizabeth Feser

Supt. Feser said she was formerly superintendent in Windsor for 9 years, 8 years in New Canaan and before that, principal at Danbury High School.

Dr. Feser said that she understands the “Small City with a Big Heart” concept, that Milford is a City but has a small town feeling. Her impressions of the school system show that the students are much more capable than test scores indicate. She said we can be doing better.

Dr. Feser said that Milford is increasing the number of Advanced Placement courses and the number of students taking them. She said that we need to pull up our reading scores.

As superintendent she can set the agenda, establish priorities and put pressure to perform on administrations and teachers to improve the system. Milford has a new teacher evaluation plan that has 45% of student performance as criteria. The State is now implementing a similar plan. Milford’s plan is a model for the State. There was concern at first but everyone has bought into the program.

Supt. Feser said we could be doing better. Milford loses a number of students to private schools at the high school level. To combat that we have to have quality programs in the high schools and then we have to market that quality education. Dr. Feser said we must get to parents when students are in sixth grade and convince them that they can get a quality education in the Milford school system. Milford loses about 75-100 students each year to private and magnet schools. Discussion was held about students leaving the Milford school system.

When asked about the International Baccalaureate Program, Dr. Feser said that we have AP courses and traditional schools that usually do not have both.

Supt. Feser is aware that a lot of people lost faith in the system the last few years because of problems with the leadership.

The importance of 2-yr community colleges was discussed.

Dr. Feser discussed security in the school system. A change in the lock system was already in progress, cameras will be placed outside linked to the police department, floor plans of the schools have been given to police, swipe cards will be used for entrance, more doors will be bar code accessible, panic buttons will be in every school, working with Chief Mello and the Mayor so that all are in sync, creation of a school security working group with police, fire, and school personnel, lock down drills, security assessment of every school with CIRMA and the Milford Police Dept., possible school resource officers (funding is

the issue) and “greeters” at the door to control access are some of the actions taken in the wake of Sandy Hook.

Mr. Ferrante asked what EDC could do to help. Supt. Feser said they could visit the schools, learn more and be a supporter of the system.

Dr. Feser said that a teacher had developed a 9-11 curriculum that no one else has. She was selected as one of 8 teachers in the country for her work.

VII. Old Business

Mr. Settineri said the film fest had an Oscar event that was not well attended. The main event is planned for September of 2014 run by Jim Amann’s group.

VIII. New Business

Chairman Kapusta mentioned that we should track some projects like the Colony Grill. He asked John O’Neil to follow up and report on that issue. Other issues he mentioned were the boardwalk and Platt Tech.

Ms. Cahill said that there was a lack of direction for the EDC. She made a motion to have a planning meeting that would address the goals of the organization. The motion was seconded.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairman Kapusta said the ordinance creating EDC said that it should promote economic development.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert B. Gregory