

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of April 23, 2014

Present: Commissioners: Robert Kapusta, Chairman, John O'Neil, Vice Chair, John DePalma, Suzanne Cahill and Michael Lynch

Advisor: Julie Nash & Kathy Alagno

Absent: Victor Ferrente & Greg Harla

Guest: John Ceruzzi

Public: Harry Garafalo & Joe Griffith

Press: Brian McCready

I. CALL TO ORDER - Chair Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – A motion was made by John DePalma and seconded by John O'Neil to approve the minutes of March 26 as presented.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Chair Kapusta commented that the Mayor was on vacation so they did not have their monthly meeting.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

V. CORRESPONDENCE – None

VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AVTIVITY – Julie Nash stated that the City of Milford had three new businesses open. The events that are being participated in are MetroNorth Getaway at Grand Central Station, Zoo Day and the Open Project Review that Joe Griffith will be heading. Ms. Nash explained that Mr. Griffith has implemented a twice monthly meeting with the different departments that will meet and review each project together. Mr. Griffith suggested that any department that is involved within a project should meet and give a brief description and the scope of the work and allow all of the departments to make the determination if they would like to participate in the review. Chair Kapusta asked Mr. Griffith if there were any developments within his departments. Mr. Griffith stated that the Building Department is taking steps to streamline both the

inspection processes in terms of scheduling and coordinating a better response time for applicants. They are no further out than one week for inspections. They also are sequencing and putting items in priority to when items are completed. A discussion continued regarding the processes of P&Z and Building Departments.

VII. GUEST SPEAKER – JOHN CERUZZI – Chair Kapusta stated that the Mayor made arrangements for Mr. Ceruzzi to attend the EDC meeting to speak to the committee about the various projects he is involved with. Mr. Ceruzzi commented that in square feet and dollar value that his company has done more in Milford than any other community that they have been in within the past twenty years. Ceruzzi Properties was a shopping center developer for the past twenty-five years. One of their first projects was just outside of Milford on the Orange line and they called it Orange Meadows and they no longer own it. The thrust of their developments moved to big box development like Home Depot and Stop and Shops. Ceruzzi has had projects from Vermont to Maryland although predominantly they have been in Connecticut and New York. When the economy took a turn in 2008, the retailers that Ceruzzi works with all took big hits. Stop and Shop has been closing their stores and a new Home Depot has not been developed in the past five years. Ceruzzi is working with another developer and they are building college apartments for the students and they are first class. Mr. Ceruzzi stated that they are in the process of building a 70 story high rise building in New York City. The first four floors are going to be retail and a New York Sports Club facility and the rest are coops.

Mr. Ceruzzi continued by saying that their first project in Milford was the Costco. They also developed Linens and Things and the Sports Authority. These two businesses are out of business and they are leasing both pieces of property. Seven or eight years ago the City bought the Jai Alai property and within a year Ceruzzi bought this property from the City and Lowes and the Hilton Garden stand on this property. He mentioned that there are two empty pads of property in front of the Lowes and asked the commission to see if they have anyone interested in these two properties. He stated that everyone who owns a business wants to be on the Post Road as an “A” market. The biggest development that Ceruzzi was involved in is Milford Crossing and the old Ryder Mobil Park. They relocated 174 families and then they developed the Walmart area. Most recently, Ceruzzi Properties bought the old National Amusements property where the Showcase Cinemas were on Cherry Street. Mr. Ceruzzi showed the site plan to the committee. They will be developing a family style restaurant, a one level 26,000 square foot building with one or two tenants and then the main anchor for the lot is ShopRite and they will

add a gas component. In addition to the site map they have plans on what the store will look like. They are in a transmittal stage of the plans going through all of the City's departments and awaiting comments so they can finalize their application and meet with the Planning and Zoning Department. Mr. Ceruzzi requested a letter of support to go to P&Z from the EDC. He spoke with Chief Edo about a truck route in and out of this complex. The traffic study indicated some new lane arrangements on Cherry Street. Ceruzzi is working with Public Works to repave the road. Chair Kapusta asked if there was a timeframe for Ceruzzi Properties to start work on this project. They are hoping to start their first phase by mid 2015. Mr. DePalma commented that the businesses who would like to be on the Post Road should not want to be on the Post Road because it is too busy of a road. Julie Nash asked the question about new job opportunities for employment. They stated about 30 jobs would open. Mr. Garafalo went over the details of the old ShopRite and the plans for the new ShopRite. A discussion continued regarding development in the City of Milford.

VIII. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. DOWNTOWN PARKING & LIAISON TO P&Z BOARD – Mr. O'Neil commented that there is nothing new to report. He stated that he would like to meet with the Mayor when Chair Kapusta meets with him for the next EDC meeting.
- B. CHAMBER – Ms. Alagno stated that in regard to tourism and working with Julie on the project at Grand Central, the Central Connecticut Tourism District is having a brochure swap which will take place in the beginning of May. The Chamber has the brochures that they produced last year and they will be bringing those up to the brochure swap to take place at the Marriott. Ginny Koslowski who is on MPI and on the RPG will be bringing the brochures to be distributed to chambers in the area for people to come into Milford. There is a meeting set for the Milford Restaurant Week which is set for October. The Bic Golf Classic takes place at the beginning of July to raise money for scholarships for students in Milford. The summer concert series is all set for down at the harbor at the Milford Rotary Pavilion.
- C. 375TH ANNIVERSARY OF MILFORD – Ms. Nash stated that she met with Pete Smith and Bob Gregory to go over plans for the 375th. Suzanne Cahill is working on sponsorships. Bob Gregory is reaching out to Kathy at the Chamber. The celebration week is set for June 6 to June 15 with events kicking off on June 6th at City Hall with the Mayor along with the Funky Dawgz – UCONN Brass

Band and they will lead everyone through the streets and end up at Stonebridge and then the stories of lore at the library. The lineup is almost done. Suzanne Cahill mentioned that they were approved to paint 99 fire hydrants that are within the original stockade or Milford. They are working with Colony Paint to provide the paint.

D. PERMIT & LAND USE PROCESS REPORT – No Report.

E. VISITATION REPORT – Mr. DePalma commented that there is a new vendor in town who is a shoe maker that does high quality work and it is important to the professional people to know he is in town. He has moved in at 160 Post Road from Stratford. There is talk of a Jewish Deli possibly moving into town as well.

IX. OLD BUSINESS – None

X. NEW BUSINESS – Suzanne Cahill made a motion to send a letter of support from the committee for the development project to encourage economic growth in regards to the National Amusements facility and John O'Neil seconded the motion.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

XI. FOR THE GOOD OF THE CITY – Chair Kapusta commented that Mr. Griffith, Director of Permitting and Land Use who remained for the entire meeting, stated that he would like to be notified of any negative comments and/or complaints concerning the performance of his Department so that he can take immediate action to remedy the issues.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m. A motion was made to end the meeting by Suzanne Cahill and seconded by Michael Lynch.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna E. Holden