

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of April 24, 2013

Present: Commissioners: Robert Kapusta, Chairman, John DePalma,  
Greg Harla, Victor Ferrante, John O'Neil and Robert Stanton

Robert Gregory, Advisor

Bryan Anderson, Aldermanic Liaison

Guests: Bill Richards Long Term Recovery Chair and Tom  
Ivers, CDBG Coordinator

Vincent Averaimo, Chair, MPI

Absent: Commissioner Suzanne Cahill, Advisor Kathy Alagno

- I. Call to Order - Mr. Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.
- II. Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of March 27, 2013, as presented.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

- III. Chairman's Report – The Chair rearranged the order of the meeting to allow Mr. Averaimo to give the report of Ms. Alagno who was not present.

## Chamber and MPI Report

Mr. Averaimo said that the membership drive was underway at the Chamber. With regards to MPI, he said that the Wayfinding Sign program was being reenergized. Emphasis will be placed on local sign locations. He said MPI was looking at the railroad underpass leading into the downtown area as recommended in the downtown study. Mr. Averaimo said that the goal would be to make it an attractive and inviting entrance to downtown.

Chairman Kapusta introduced the newest Commissioner Greg Harla. Mr. Harla is part owner of a construction and distribution company based in Shelton.

- IV. Public Comments – No member of the public was present.

## V. Guest Speakers

The Chair introduced Mr. Richards as a guest who was recommended by the Mayor.

Mr. Richards said that he is a local resident, a retired firefighter, Deputy Director of Emergency Management and Chair of the Long Term Recovery Committee. He presented the commission with information on the damage from Storms Irene and Sandy. After Irene there was \$8,204,614 worth of damage and after Sandy \$27,899,170 for a total of \$36,103,784. FEMA has two programs; one for individual assistance and another to assist communities. FEMA was located in Milford to assist homeowners. Mr. Richards had a FEMA representative with him through January. Assistance has come for temporary housing, repairs, construction, etc. in the amount of \$2,115,329. Other needs assistance used for appliances, transportation, medical needs, and personal property amounts to \$233,354.

Other FEMA programs include the National Flood Insurance Program, Disaster Legal Services and Disaster Unemployment Assistance. SBA had a loan program available with \$5,558,600 approved for Milford residence.

Mr. Richards said that the Silver Sands area was particularly hit hard by Sandy.

Businesses were not particularly hit hard. Some marinas, the yacht club, were damaged to some degree.

The Long Term Recovery Committee has all local private assistance groups and city agencies involved. They deal with individual cases as well as develop programs for long term recovery.

When asked about acquisition, Mr. Richards said that FEMA has a buyout program. The City is reluctant to purchase homes because the property must be left as open space forever.

The issue of sea level rise was discussed. The future of some areas of Milford is in jeopardy of future flooding. Some people are walking away from their homes.

Discussion was held regarding the availability of funding for elevation and the process of elevating. Mr. Richards said that we are 6 months from the event and homeowners are still paying for a mortgage and

taxes on a place they can't live in. They are also paying rent, some with FEMA assistance but that does not cover all the expenses. Mr. Ivers addressed the Sandy Relief Act which is channeling funding through the HUD Block Grant Program to affected communities. He presented a brief summary of that Act and the State Allocation Plan. No funding was allocated for mitigation and the division of funds was heavily weighted in favor of Fairfield County. The Mayor has sent a letter expressing our concerns to the Department of Housing and all our elected officials. The state referred to FEMA as a source for mitigation but we do not have any information about when such funding might be available.

VI. Correspondence

Correspondence contained in the packages was noted. Chairman Kapusta noted the email from the Mayor suggesting the Commission evaluate C-PACE and work with MPI and the Chamber on the Adopt-A-Spot

VII. Economic Development Activity

Mr. Gregory said that the closing of Warnaco will take place over 18 months. A company contacted the City willing to hire employees and we served as a matchmaker.

VIII. Committee Reports

- A. Platt Tech – No Report
- B. Boardwalk Repairs – Chair Kapusta noted that the Mayor said the boardwalk will be repaired by Memorial Day.
- C. Colony Grill – Mr. O'Neil said they are targeting a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week in May opening.
- D. Visitation Report – Mr. DePalma visited Lamor Industries. He was very impressed with this Finnish company that deals with oil spill cleanup worldwide. They employ 25 people in Milford. They are leasing 31,000sf at 155 Hill Street and are negotiating for more.

IX. Old Business

There was no old business.

X. New Business

- A. C-PACE

Mr. Ivers said that this program would allow building owners to finance qualifying energy and clean energy improvements through an additional charge ("assessment") on their property tax. The funding would come out of the Clean Energy and Finance and Investment Authority and be repaid over time. The City of Milford would be the servicing agency administered by the Tax Department.

After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to have Mr. DePalma and Mr. Gregory visit other communities who have implemented C-PACE and report back to the Commission.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

B. Adopt-A-Spot

XI. For the Good of the Community

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert B. Gregory