

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of May 28, 2014

Present: Commissioners: Robert Kapusta, Chairman, John O'Neil, Vice Chair, Michael Lynch, and Victor Ferrante

Advisor: Julie Nash & Kathy Alagno

Absent: Suzanne Cahill, John DePalma & Greg Harla

Guest: John Bourget, John Knuff & Kevin McManus

Press: Pam McLouthin, New Haven Register

I. CALL TO ORDER - Chair Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – A motion was made by John O'Neil and seconded by Michael Lynch to approve the minutes of April 23 as presented.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Chair Kapusta commented that he and John O'Neil met with the Mayor where they discussed the parking situation downtown. They also discussed the fact that Tourism is an added item on the agenda and the Mayor has asked that any items added to the agenda be approved by him. The Mayor appointed Suzanne Cahill as Chair of the Tourism committee. A motion was made by Victor Ferrante and seconded by John O'Neil to approve the appointment of Suzanne Cahill. Chair Kapusta stated that they also discussed the Wayfinding situation. The Mayor agrees with the decision of MPI and this was to endorse the idea for Julie Nash to immediately move forward with two signs. Also discussed was the Farmer's Market that will be taking place soon. The Mayor stated that he is extremely impressed with the new Public Works Director, Chris Saley. The next speaker will be James Maroney, State Representative.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

V. CORRESPONDENCE – A press release was included in the package regarding changes to the Permitting and Land Use Department and a letter to Benjamin Gettinger from Chair Kapusta supporting the

redevelopment project proposed at 230 Cherry Street. The Planning and Zoning Board did approve the application.

- VI. PROJECT PRESENTATION** – Julie Nash introduced Kevin McManus and John Knuff to present their proposed development of the current smiles site. John Knuff introduced himself as representing C & G Milford, which is the property owner of the former smiles site and his client Kevin McManus from Capelli Enterprises. Capelli Enterprises is an extremely large and well respected developer in White Plains, Stamford and lower Fairfield County and they are now moving up the line to Milford. They will be submitting applications soon for the smiles site. The Inland/Wetlands Dept. approved this project in one night because of the dramatic improvements to the site. The site is an oddly configured parcel and there are wetlands and water courses that affect the parcel, but there will be drastic improvements to every piece of the site. The site in addition to having wetlands and water courses is also in a floodway. There will be no negative impact on any floodways. They have a 7 ½ acre parcel but they are only developing approximately 36,000 square feet. All of the asphalt will be removed and is being planted and all of the parking is being reestablished away from the wetlands.

Kevin McManus continued stating that they have partnered with the Gettlin family to reposition this venture as a state of the art and up-to-date facility and bring in some uses that are consistent with the quality that is on the Post Road. Mr. McManus commented that it was important to his firm to come up with new architectural themes that will tie in with the existing properties. To improve traffic flow they have made an arrangement with the adjoining property owner to the north to be able to tie the parking lot into their parking lot which is Chase that would both come out at the traffic light. This will be a huge improvement. The site will have a roadway that supplies parking underneath the building. They will be working with Panera for a drive through, Verizon and a possible sporting goods store. They have been working with Ray Oliver to break up the façade with some columns and different materials. He stated that they have also been working with David Sulkis and Westcott and Mapes. They will be submitting to P&Z in the next few days. They asked the commission for a letter of support.

- VII. GUEST SPEAKER – JOHN BOURGET** – Chair Kapusta introduced the guest speaker of Witan and stated that John is the President and Founder of the company. Chair Kapusta stated that he sent the commission a brochure which contains his resume and he is the former manager who owned Stop & Shop. He holds an MBA from the University of Hartford and a BS degree from Tufts University.

John stated that his business has two roles. One is market research and the second is marketing strategy. John stated that he works for a lot of different industries and it is diverse. The common denominator in all of these cases is what marketing strategy should be used. He commented that about 25 years ago he started doing some work for the CT office of Tourism and they wanted John to do some market research and stated that 25% of his business is tourism related. It started out with the State and their efforts to market to patrons who wanted to come and enjoy the State for a getaway. In the process of his work he started doing work for museums and other attractions in the area. Barbara Cieplak from the State and John developed a program that is called Vision. Vision is an ongoing survey of visitors to the State collected at attractions and events around the State and it is an understanding of what visitors and tourists are doing. They discovered that 2/3 of the people are from in State and there is a healthy majority that are coming from in State but have guests from out of State. The money that people come and spend in your city is valuable on an economic level. Vision goes out and interviews patrons and measures the economic impact of the visitors in the city. A discussion continued on the value of the visitors to a city. John also stated that they can measure the economic impact of the visitors as well as direct spending. Vision tries to determine how the city can maximize the revenue during the events in the summer, since the summer is a main season for the city. Julie mentioned that there are several tourism grants that the city can apply for and Barbara thought it was a good idea for John to get involved with the City of Milford. There are several different ways to do the intercept study. Julie stated that her goal at the end of the survey would be to determine who is coming into the city, how long are they staying, how much are they spending and is there something that we don't have in the City that the visitors are looking for. Ms. Nash and John will work together to initiate this survey study.

VIII. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. DOWNTOWN PARKING & LIAISON TO P&Z BOARD – Mr. O'Neil commented that he and Chair Kapusta met with the Mayor and they focused on the parking picture. There is a possibility of acquiring property downtown and turning it into a major parking resource. The pocket parking idea is the alternative. The Mayor has asked them to work on some signs to identify these places. John has a call out to Chris Saley and will schedule a meeting with Julie to identify the key parking areas that are available.

B. CHAMBER – Ms. Alagno stated that they are moving ahead for the restaurant week and they will establish a date. They are looking for sponsors to help with the expenses for the week and the website. MPI made a decision to go ahead and support Julie Nash in her efforts to move forward on the grant.

C. 375TH ANNIVERSARY OF MILFORD/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – Ms. Nash stated that she attached a schedule of events for the celebration week. June 6 is the kickoff, the 14th is the food truck, beer & wine festival and the fireworks show and then on the 15th is the end of the week with the 375th parade. The activity report is attached. Senator Murphy and Representative Himes recently brought the google website into town to assist small businesses and is free for the next year. Governor Malloy is sending out another multi-million dollar grant for the brownfield sites. They will be meeting and touring the sites.

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

E. VISITATION REPORT – No Report.

F. TOURISM – No Report.

IX. OLD BUSINESS – None

X. NEW BUSINESS – None

XI. FOR THE GOOD OF THE CITY – None

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. A motion was made to end the meeting by Victor Ferrante and seconded by Michael Lynch.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna E. Holden