

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of July 22, 2015

Present: Commissioners: John O'Neil, Chairman, Suzanne Cahill, John DePalma, Victor Ferrante & Michael Lynch

Absent: Kathy Alagno, Julie Nash & Greg Harla

**I. CALL TO ORDER** - Chair O'Neil called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – A motion was made by Michael Lynch and seconded by John DePalma to approve the minutes of June 24, 2015.

APPROVED WITH 1 ABSTENTION

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – Chair O'Neil stated that at the meeting held on June 24, the commission discussed the list of the Mayor's suggested projects. The project that was selected is to host a roundtable with the commercial realtors and/or developers at a separate meeting in September to discuss how the commission can help. The suggestion was to compile a master list of properties that could be distributed for sale or lease. The questions that need to be asked are: What can the commission do that will help connect and push the commercial business forward? Should the commission host another broker's showcase on a quarterly or semi-annual basis with commercial brokers and have a guest speaker? The main idea should be that "Milford is a Hot Commodity" and how does the commission convey what Milford has to offer. John DePalma offered his services to meet with potential business clients to answer questions and show the client properties that are available in the City. Mr. DePalma will call Carl Russell to set up a meeting.

Chair O'Neil commented that Ms. Nash stated that there is funding through the Department of Economic & Community Development for a Government Loan Operation. Chair O'Neil suggested that the commission work with the Chamber to facilitate an event at a downtown location. The idea is to have Joe Williams be the guest speaker who runs the government loan/grant operation and to have him explain how this program works. Also discussed was the idea of a Downtown Ambassador program that consists of working with the DMBA and a New Haven representative that Julie Nash has spoken with. Julie will discuss, but was called out of the EDC meeting by the Mayor. Chair O'Neil commented that he was interested in hearing

what the City of New Haven does with their program and he has heard that it has been a huge success. Chair O'Neil will connect with Julie Nash to set a date for September for this separate meeting. A discussion continued regarding the variety of businesses in Downtown Milford and weekend hours. It was also mentioned that there is a huge tree in front of Mr. Mac's Canteen that is blocking the signage for downtown. Chair O'Neil stated that he will look into this issue. Ms. Cahill also mentioned the signage off of I-95 by Expect that there is a sign that points commuters towards the mall, but there is no sign to loop commuters around to Cherry Street. He will also follow-up with Public Works on this issue as well. John will also continue to try to connect with MPI to come to one of the EDC meetings to be a guest speaker. Bridges was suggested to come and speak at one of the EDC meetings as well.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None

**V. CORRESPONDENCE** - None

**VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY** – Report Attached.

**VII. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. DOWNTOWN PARKING – Chair O'Neil stated that the City will close on the two properties on High Street probably within the next month. The Agro property will not close until sometime in November.

B. CHAMBER – No Report.

C. PERMIT & LAND USE - FERRANTE/GRIFFITH – No Report.

D. VISITATION REPORT – Mr. DePalma stated that Queen Zuri has recently opened and it is a New Orleans Cajun restaurant. It is mostly take-out and Mr. DePalma raved about the cuisine. Ms. Cahill commented that Kingdom Life helps fund their parishioners businesses to help them get started. They will give them some sort of reduction in rent, etc. Walnut Beach also matched funding for the Façade Program. Ms. Cahill also stated that it would be a great idea to try and work towards a grant program that would match funds for the Downtown Milford businesses and other businesses in Milford. Chair O'Neil thought this was a great idea and the subject will be revisited.

E. TOURISM – Ms. Cahill commented that there has been a lot of activity at the beaches and the wayfinding signs are directing people there. The Farmer's markets are all open - Woodmont on Wednesdays, Downtown on Saturdays and Devon on Sundays.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS** – None.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS** – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m. A motion was unanimously carried to finalize the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna E. Holden