

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Meeting of August 27, 2014

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

Advisors: Julie Nash & Kathy Alagno

Absent: Victor Ferrante

Zoom Fellow: Jenna Lupi

Public: Alderman Bryan Anderson

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12 p.m.
- II. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – A motion was made by Suzanne Cahill and seconded by Michael Lynch to approve the minutes of July 23 as presented.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

- III. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – Chair Kapusta welcomed Jenna Lupi to the EDC meeting. Ms. Lupi is a Zoom Fellow who will be working with Julie Nash to learn more about government and the policy aspects of the Community and Economic Development Dept. for one year. Chair Kapusta commented that he met with the Mayor briefly and the Mayor is concerned about the attendance for the EDC meetings. Chair Kapusta and the Mayor also visited the signage and the parking issues. Mayor Blake will be the next speaker for the meeting scheduled for September 24. The Mayor also has spoken with Elizabeth Howard and he would like the commission to address a letter that was received regarding parking in downtown Milford.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Alderman Bryan Anderson stated that he would like to encourage John O'Neil to continue his efforts to provide downtown signage in Milford and he commented that the signs and the logo look terrific. They have been placed in key spots and encouraged Mr. O'Neil to identify additional spots for signs. Alderman Anderson extended gratitude and appreciation to the Mayor and Mr. O'Neil for the progress of the signage. He is also excited about DOT's approval for the Train Trestle project and the possible parking structure. Alderman Anderson encouraged the commission to

continue in the same direction and as a new project to possibly go with the traffic initiative that was laid out by Alan Plattus.

V. CORRESPONDENCE – None

VI. GUEST SPEAKER – JUSTINE LASALA – Chair Kapusta introduced the guest speaker Justine LaSala. He stated that Ms. LaSala is the Supervisor of Science and Technical Arts for Milford Public Schools and she has been in this position for three years. Ms. LaSala attending Binghamton for Undergrad, The New School for Social Research in New York City for her Masters, and Sacred Heart for her 6th year and Administrative license. She will be speaking on a program to assist local businesses. The Mayor has indicated that he would like Ms. LaSala to visit the action for the Core Curriculum issue and bullying.

Ms. LaSala stated that Julie Nash and she met with Dr. Feser last year and they both recognized that there was a desire to create better connections across the community in the school district and find ways that they could support each other and build on common work that they were working on. Ms. LaSala oversees the career and technical education programs in the district. It came to light that many people are not aware of what they do or offer to students in the courses. They have created new courses and have instituted these new courses in the high schools in the past two years. A discussion continued regarding the new courses that have been added to the curriculum to create possible career decisions for students.

Ms. LaSala continued stating that there is a partnership between the school district and the Town of Wallingford. They have created a storefront downtown called the Hub Cab and it is supposed to be an innovation of a business incubator but also a place for students to acquire career experiences maybe to do possible internships with businesses. It is a school and community incubator space. The schools acquired a food truck for which the culinary students ran but also they got involved with the town and local businesses in terms of decorating the truck and outfitting the truck. The students developed the menu and they interviewed local businesses to figure out how to run the truck and their business. The truck visits the Senior Center once a week and they also are part of the local Farmer's Market and they have a business plan. Ms. LaSala believes ideas of this kind are inspiring for the City and schools to come together to create meaningful opportunities for the community. She stated that if the City of Milford is interested in this idea, they should meet with the Town of Wallingford and meet with the Superintendent and the people who started this program. Julie Nash said that when Justine met

with her they decided they needed to combine ideas through the EDC and the Milford Board of Education to help the students acquire these goals and skills. The question is: how to help the students?? Justine also attended the MPI meeting and she will be working with Julie and some students over the next year to create an APP for downtown parking issues. Ms. LaSala has also put in for a grant for printing materials, etc. so that the businesses can partner with the school system.

Chair Kapusta asked Ms. LaSala to speak on the common core issues. She explained that the State Department of Education said that they would adopt the standards and Connecticut has adopted the standards but has changed the name to Connecticut Core Standards. These standards are for Language Arts and Math. The idea is that there would be common standards across the country. Previously, every state had their own set of standards. A discussion continued regarding common standards for the United States to be able to compete throughout the world.

VII. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. DOWNTOWN PARKING & LIAISON TO P&Z BOARD – Mr. O’Neil discussed Elizabeth Howard’s letter and her upset about receiving a parking ticket while she visited Milford. Kathy Alagno noted that the parking times, etc. are listed on the Chamber and Downtown Milford Business Association’s websites. These times need to be standardized. Mr. O’Neil commented that the goal is to make sure additional signs get posted. A discussion continued regarding the parking issues in the City of Milford and downtown.
- B. CHAMBER – Kathy Alagno commented that the Chamber’s website is new and up and running. A major portion of the website is about tourism and living and working in Milford. They are hoping that this will attract new businesses. September 7 the Milford Fun & Fit day will take place at Eisenhower Park. September 27 Devon Rotary will be having the Oktoberfest at Fowler Field, which follows the Irish Festival a week prior to Oktoberfest. October 18 is a health and wellness event. October 6 is the start of Restaurant Week.
- C. 375TH ANNIVERSARY OF MILFORD/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – Julie Nash commented that the 375th committee’s next big events are planned for the weekend of November 9 for Veteran’s Day. They are working in conjunction with the Veteran’s groups in Milford to make the parade larger and bring attention to families

and to give assistance to those families. There will be another set of fireworks that same evening.

Julie Nash continued saying that there have been several new businesses that have opened in the Milford business community. In regards to the parking, Rob Kurfehs had sent Julie a presentation about how to brand and market Milford and part of that was the logo. The Mayor saw the logo and immediately commented that the logo really speaks to Milford. It is a credit to both our Mayor and Rob and he is continuing to help out with this project and also creating the signs for the Walnut Beach area. The train trestle upgrade is moving along. DOT asked Julie to acquire a structural engineer and create a design plan that they will need to approve before moving forward. Chris Saley and Julie are working on having a group to get these items together. DOT gave permission and donated the kiosk space to Milford. They just finished on August 22nd the call to artists and they are in the process of picking the pictures for the kiosk area. The bike rack feedback was overwhelming and 10 bike racks have been ordered with the Milford logo. The people who picked the bike rack locations will be invited when they are put in and selfie pictures will be taken so the community can be involved with this project.

Kathy Alagno commented that there was a success story from the Grand Central Station program. The Metro North vacation package encourages people to take the train and stay for a week or weekend. She came here for a week and stayed at the Fairfield Inn. The shuttle came and picked her up to bring her to the hotel, took the shuttle to the mall, and took the shuttle to the beach. Kathy Alagno called the Fairfield Inn and they commented that there have been 15 different people that came in after receiving the vacation package.

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

E. VISITATION REPORT – Mr. DePalma stated that Staples is closing 125 to 130 stores because of the Internet. The next to go will be Barnes and Noble. Bob Stanton brought this to John's attention a while ago and this will affect Milford's tax base. Mr. DePalma commented on the cloud and how it will affect ADP and how this will do away with data processing in general. He commented that the Mayor of Shelton lower taxes.

F. TOURISM – No Report.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS – None

IX. NEW BUSINESS – None

X. FOR THE GOOD OF THE CITY – None

The meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m. A motion was unanimously carried to end the meeting by John O’Neil and seconded by Michael Lynch.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna E. Holden