

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of**  
**October 24, 2007**

**PRESENT**

Members: Chairman Robert Kapusta, John DePalma, Robert Gregory,  
Cyrus Settineri, Peter Spalthoff, Robert Stanton

Guest: Tom Cariglio – United Illuminating, Economic Development Specialist

Press: Bill McDonald & Jim Tinley - New Haven Register

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Kapusta called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of September 26, 2007 as distributed.

Chairman Kapusta said he would like to discuss Mr. Settineri's report. He had discussed the matter with the Mayor and he said that they should pay attention to the second part of the current project to update directional signs (Wayfinding).

Chairman Kapusta also mentioned that MPI had a meeting on October 23 that dealt with the sign regulation amendments that have been approved by MPI and are being filed with the Planning and Zoning Board for consideration.

Chairman Kapusta continued by saying that the Mayor talked about the Welcoming Letter to each business, Mr. Spalthoff's suggestion, and the Mayor thought that this was an excellent idea as well. Chairman Kapusta and the Mayor also reviewed the Taking Care of Business Outline of possible actions from Mr. Gregory and the Mayor thought having an updated list of available business sites for new people coming into Milford available on the web was also a great idea. Chairman Kapusta recommended putting three new additional items on the agenda for the next meeting. Wayfinding signs, Welcoming Letter, and available business sites.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

**III. Standing Reports**

E. Building Permit Task Force – Mr. Settineri stated that many of the recommendations the Mayor made to the Building Department have been

implemented. It seems there are still some issues with the department. Mr. Settineri will be meeting with the Mayor next month and develop a process to be more efficient. Mr. Settineri has spoken to the Mayor regarding the Committee's request last month about some issues that the commission could address.

A. Milford Chamber of Commerce – No Report

- B. Milford Progress, Inc. – Mr. DePalma stated that the signage regulation amendments are going to Planning and Zoning. The WAVE bus service during the summer time on the weekends was discussed. The number of people using this service went up from 418 to 446 and it seems to be growing every year. The establishments seem to like the service for convenience. This is the third year they are doing this program.

MPI has added three more board members, John Bergin, Cyrus Settineri and Terry O'Brien. There was a nomination and approval for the MPI Economic Development award to Ceruzzi Development. Ceruzzi purchased the Jai Alai property from the City and is developing it with Lowe's as the major tenant. The City purchased the property for \$12.8M and sold it for \$14M. The Town will be collecting quite significant real estate taxes from this property. The Downtown Milford Business Association (DMBA) was also considered for this award. Smith Kraft has done an excellent job on the property on Cherry Street. Mr. DePalma also stated that Old Gate Lane has cleaned up very nicely. Joe Hebert mentioned that there were no closings of any shops in downtown.

C. Downtown Milford Business Association – No Report

- D. Real Estate Trends & Developments – Mr. Spalthoff commented that in spite of all of the gloom and doom that everyone is reading and hearing on TV, Milford is still holding their own. Milford permits are up 4% over last year and down 1 ½% on sales prices. Milford arms is going to be a terrific location for some condos. The average house is still selling at \$335,000.

**IV. Devon, Downtown & General Economic Activity** – Mr. Gregory said the DMBA presented the movie "Young Frankenstein" on the green. It was a great success and they are planning 6 for next year. Smith Kraft opened Shoreline Station with 20 apartments. Milford Marketplace is going to have its formal grand opening on November 2. Some stores have opened and they are doing great business already. Lowe's target date for opening is November 25. The former Gathering site was approved by Planning and Zoning for one 10,000 sf CVS. They revised their plans eliminating the bank and P&Z approved. A discussion continued regarding buildings and properties in Milford. Milford Academy to be scheduled to open in February.

## **V. Items & Matters of Continuing Interest**

- A. Devon Revitalization Program – Mr. Gregory stated that Milone & MacBroom presented the drainage study. They came in with two main alternatives to the problem. There is a desire to get the State involved because some of the runoff comes from US1 down onto Naugatuck Avenue. A meeting is planned DOT to see if there can be cooperation. Mr. Gregory continued by saying that \$800,000 has been allocated by the Mayor in bonding for a solution.

Phase III planning is underway. Milone & MacBroom have met with some of the property owners. The streetscape will run on Bridgeport Avenue from Kerema to the intersection of Naugatuck. The schedule is for design to be completed and go out to bid some time in the wintertime with construction to start next spring.

- B. Walnut Beach Redevelopment – Mr. Gregory said there are some creative people in Walnut Beach like Susan Patrick who owns the Walnut Beach Creamery and the couple who own Clay Nichols Studio. They are having a Halloween event for people with a Halloween parade and a free ice cream. Chairman Kapusta commented that something to look forward to is the boardwalk at Walnut Beach. The boardwalk will be a key development in the future of the area. The boardwalk is costing \$3M and the Federal Government has granted \$1M. They are anticipating an opening on the boardwalk in 2008. Chairman Kapusta believes the boardwalk will be a main attraction at Walnut Beach.
- C. Correspondence – Chairman Kapusta stated that a letter was addressed to him and Kathy Alagno from Jack Fowler. The letter refers the Democratic website criticizing Walmart. Mr. Kapusta thought the members of the committee might want to comment on this letter. Mr. DePalma stated that Jack Fowler was absolutely correct. The change that Mr. DePalma likes is Milford Marketplace where the Wayside furniture used to be. That's the latest trend in merchandising and that won't pull from downtown but rather from the Mall. The content of the letter is right on target. The City's population would not be against Walmart because it is convenient and they are open seven days a week. Mr. DePalma stated that downtown is just doing fine.
- D. Proposed Courthouse Expansion/Milford Post Office/Downtown Parking Structure – Chairman Kapusta stated that the veto of the bonding budget has delaying the authorization for the Courthouse Expansion. All departments and the Mayor have given approval.
- E. Eisenhower Park – No Report
- F. Business Initiatives – Mr. Spalthoff commented that he would like to expand the welcome to business letter into some sort of a package. A

nice letter from Chairman Kapusta to the new business people as they move in stating pertinent information for the City. Mr. Gregory mentioned that there is a package they can put together with some material from the state and UI. Mr. Gregory and Mr. Cariglio work a lot with developments that are happening so that hopefully even before they are in the construction phase that UI can get in there with cost saving ideas for their electrical needs. Also mentioned was the charge of the commission and that is to encourage new business and work with existing business. There is an Economic Development plan that Mr. Gregory said that he would make copies available.

## **VI. Old Business - None**

## **VII. New Business**

**Guest Speaker** – Mr. Cariglio stated that he works in the Economic Development Department in United Illuminating Company (UI). He has been with UI for 21 years and has been in different areas of the company. He used to be in generation for quite a while until they sold off their plants and they were forced to deregulate. He also worked for a while as a commercial collector and sales of lighting before he took on the Economic Development position. UI is focusing on business retention and expansion. UI feels that a lot of the municipalities in their service area don't have a good business retention and expansion program, which is very important. Mr. Cariglio stated that it sounds like this Economic Commission is trying to get hold of what is going on out there in Milford. Cariglio pointed out that sending a welcome letter is a good idea. But follow-up is needed. He stated that it is important to go out there and sit with businesses and find out what their needs are and what the challenges they face. It is good to give them that warm and fuzzy feeling that the City wants you here, wants you to stay here, and appreciates you being here. Mr. Cariglio continued by saying that's what this Business Outreach Program, which goes hand in hand with new software that UI, has acquired.

Mr. Spalthoff stated that he loves warm and fuzzy and he believes yes someone will come back and say we heard from you when we first opened but where have you been for the last year. The problem is that Mr. Gregory is the be all and end all. Mr. Spalthoff also mentioned that the commission gets invited to grand openings through the Chamber. Mr. Spalthoff just believes that at least one of the members of the EDC should be at all of the grand openings to hand out the package and to introduce themselves as from the commission. Mr. Cariglio commented that UI has the resources to be there at all of the openings. The main goal is to keep businesses in this area. It is a fact that 70% of the existing businesses do create new jobs and also expansion.

Mr. Cariglio mentioned that Mr. Gregory and he were just at a UI Economic Development conference and one of the things mention was that there are approximately 15,000 economic and development administrations

throughout the country that are chasing 200 relocations a year. We need make sure existing companies stay where here.

The Executive Pulse program states you have to have your finger on the pulse of what is going on in your business community. Northeast Utilities recently purchased this platform for Executive Pulse. It is a business retention and expansion program. UI is going to pay for that fee so all of their municipalities can acquire this platform. It is a web-based platform, which enables everyone to share information so whatever UI enters into this program everyone can share. This program will print out reports, compare different businesses and it does a whole host of things other things. CERC and DECD are looking at getting this program and it is a good way of getting everyone linked together. UI goes out into the community for a lot of conservation purposes because the cost of electricity is so high. Mr. Cariglio continued by saying that Mr. Gregory would not know really what UI is doing if he didn't ask or Mr. Cariglio did not share the information with him that UI went out to XYZ Company in Milford and saved them 20 or 30% on their electrical usage because UI changed out all the lights or went to variable speed motors. A lot of people in the community don't realize what incentives UI offers because everyone is too busy running their company. UI feels that this is a good way to speak to businesses, to see what their challenges are and to be all connected together. UI will be rolling out this program by early 2008. Mr. Cariglio said he would be rolling Executive Pulse out with the EDC and the Chamber.

Mr. Gregory stated that the Commission did a similar thing back in the 1980's with UI called Taking Care of Business. In fact, some of those ideas were taken from that report. Mr. Cariglio stated that this whole idea is to be proactive instead of reactive. A discussion continued regarding cost of electricity and how to lower prices.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Holden