

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
OCTOBER 25, 2006

PRESENT

Members: Chairman Robert Kapusta, Lisa Arenberg, Robert Gregory *NV, Peter Spalthoff, Bob Stanton and Wendy Weir

Press: Frank Juliano, CT Post

COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Vice-Chairman Paul Austin, Kathy Alagno *NV, Ken Brannin,

*NV denotes non-voting member

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

I. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of September 27, 2006 were approved as distributed.

II. Standing Reports

A. Milford Chamber of Commerce – No report.

B. Milford Progress, Inc. – Chairman Kapusta said that he and Mr. Gregory had attended the Milford Progress, Inc. (MPI) meeting. He reported that MPI had voted to approve the contract with Wilbur Smith for the signage study and proposal for the downtown area at \$7,900 for the first phase, then \$41,000 balance for the second phase. Mr. Kapusta had made the recommendation at the MPI meeting for Wilbur Smith to submit the Phase I signage regulation language to Planning and Zoning prior to continuing the Phase II for their input and approval. MPI approved this recommendation.

Mr. Stanton said that the majority of the downtown signs do not currently comply. Ms. Weir suggested that Mr. Stanton would be a good person to have on a signage committee with all of his prior experience operating Mr. Sign. Mr. Gregory said that a committee would be formed.

Mr. Gregory said that the Devon committee is collaborating with MPI to work on their signage, also.

There followed some discussion about forming a review committee for signage. However, Mr. Stanton said that, in his experience, review

committees were problematic in most cases. He does not recommend forming a review committee.

- C. Downtown Milford Business Association – Mr. Spalthoff said that there was not anything major to report at this time. Mr. Gregory reminded all of the Lamplight Stroll planned for December 8-9. He said that many people had come forward to volunteer their help, and mentioned the success of the summer's Captain Kidd event. Ms. Arenberg said that the "new blood" downtown was great.
- D. Real Estate Trends & Developments – Ms. Weir referred to Mr. Gregory's report included in the package showing sales are down. However, she was pleased to see that Milford had made the Top 10 list in the November issue of *Connecticut* magazine, also enclosed in the package. Mr. Gregory said that Milford was listed at #6, with one of Milford's drawbacks being the Library at a per capita of a low \$16.67. Ms. Weir said that she thought the median house price listed for Milford of \$320,000 was a bit low. She would say that it was more like \$329,000. Mr. Gregory said the magazine has about a three-month lag time, which may account for the difference.
- E. Devon, Downtown & General Economic Activity – Mr. Gregory reported that a parking study is also taking place in addition to a signage study for Devon. Flooding is an issue and will also be addressed in Devon near St. Ann's and along Naugatuck Avenue. The flooding is a storm drain issue. The Mayor and Speaker Amann have both committed their help in resolving this issue. Mr. Gregory further reported that the sidewalk is nearly completed. A request has been made to Speaker Amann for continued funding for Devon streetscapes, burying the power lines, and for a study for the River Walk as recommend in the Plan of Development. Mr. Gregory also referred to his Economic Development Activity Report in the package.
- F. Sewer Commission Developments – No report.

III. Items & Matters of Continuing Interest

- A. Jai Alai Disposition Status – Mr. Kapusta said that the only holdup at this time were the final two easements, but the agreed upon payments are being made monthly of \$100,000 (\$25,000 towards purchase price/\$75,000 for carrying costs).

Mr. Gregory invited all to the Devon Liberty Rock dedication on November 11, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.

- B. Walnut Beach Redevelopment – Mr. Kapusta brought to everyone's attention the Stowe Farm handout in the package. Mr. Gregory said that the turn out for the focus groups has been very good. All the ideas will

be sifted into the plan for the building. The Milford Fine Arts Council will manage the building.

Ms. Weir said that the foundations are in for the Walnut Beach development, and work would continue through the winter.

- C. Huffman Koos Site Status – Mr. Kapusta announced that a representative from CBL, the developer, would be asked to be a guest speaker at a future EDC meeting.

It was also agreed upon that this agenda item should read in the future as: Milford Marketplace Site Status.

- D. Correspondence – None
- E. Proposed Downtown Historical District – Mr. Stanton reported that he has not been able to attend the meetings of late. Mr. Kapusta said that the Board of Aldermen has received the report, and the next step is to put it to the neighborhood vote, with two-thirds approval in order to pass. Then it would go back to the Board of Aldermen for final approval.
- F. Proposed Courthouse Expansion/Milford Post Office – No developments to report.
- G. Downtown Parking Structure – No report.
- H. Eisenhower Park – Mr. Kapusta said that we were waiting for the City's acquisition of 7.7 acres on Orange Avenue. He also announced that the manager of Monroe's Wolfe Park is scheduled to be the guest speaker at the EDC's next meeting on November 29, 2006.

IV. Old Business

Mr. Gregory brought the Commission members attention to page 34 in the package regarding the October 23, 2006, editorial in the *Connecticut Post* about the Arts Center at Stowe Farm.

V. New Business – None

VI. Other Business – None

With no other business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Eisler, Recording Secretary