

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES
October 28, 2009

Present: Commissioners: Genevieve Salvatore, Chair,
Susan Ashelford, John DePalma, and Tessa Marquis

Advisor: Robert Gregory

Guests: Dan Malloy, Mayor of Stamford
Chris Reardon, and Bill Petrie, Workforce Alliance

PZ Rep: Susan Shaw

Press: Frank Juliano, CT Post

- I. Chair Salvatore called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m.
- II. The minutes of the meeting of September 23, 2009, were accepted as presented.
- III. Economic Development Report

In addition to the attached report, Mr. Gregory reported that a Citgo commercial had been shot in Milford over the past weekend.

Chair Salvatore introduced Susan Shaw who will be the liaison from the Planning and Zoning Commission. Ms. Shaw noted the Local Proud Kickoff.

Chair Salvatore asked for a suspension of the agenda to facilitate the guest speakers. The commission agreed.

- IV. Guest Speaker – Mayor Dan Malloy

Chairwoman Salvatore introduced the Mayor of Stamford, Dan Malloy who has been involved in municipal energy projects.

Mayor Malloy said that Connecticut was one of two states that had fewer jobs than they did in 1990.

He said that Milford should capitalize on the economic development of the train station location. He noted that Milford's employment patterns showed an almost equal number of people traveling out of the City to those traveling into the City. About 1,000 people commute on the train to Stamford.

One of his employees could not use the train if he had a nighttime meeting because of the limited service at night.

Malloy said he began to focus on environmental issues in 1998 when Stamford received a Rebuild America Grant to hire a person who would be responsible for managing energy use by the City. The City prepared an energy audit and created a local action plan for greenhouse gas emissions. Stamford created a baseline for greenhouse gas emissions that addressed both community and public outputs. The City has initiated 70 projects for municipal buildings to reduce energy use and reduce emissions. Energy use in City buildings has been reduced by 19% since 1998. He outlined a number of those projects. Computer software automatically turns off all computers when not in use in the City system. Two major installations of solar are complete and two more are underway. The two underway are at a school and a garage. Automobile use by Stamford is shifting to hybrid vehicles.

Mayor Malloy said Stamford has been awarded \$1.8 million in Energy Block Grant funds. \$500,000 will be spent for conversion of streetlight systems to high efficiency lighting, \$223,000 for fuel cell and hybrid power plan at the government center, \$220,000 for lighting retrofit in schools, and \$123,000 for vehicle charging stations downtown. Two other grants were received from the CT Clean Energy Fund for solar projects.

All new City buildings are required to be silver LEED certified and the Planning and Zoning Board is requiring new development to be LEED certified.

Stamford has committed to have 20% of its energy from renewable sources. Sustainable Stamford is a task force that has had a number of successes.

Water Pollution Control authority is preparing a design for a gasification plant that would handle the biosolids from sewage treatment plant and create energy.

He said transit orientated development is the next big wave of repositioning cities for a more competitive world. Stamford has built about 5,500 units of housing in the last 14 years with the vast majority in the downtown area. Another 5,000 units have been approved for a former industrial corridor. All construction is within a 10 minute walk from the train station.

Malloy said that green jobs are coming. Communities should be ready for them. The State should make it easier for them to come here.

The Mayor summed up by saying that communities that reduce the use of energy create jobs and save money. Encouraging mass transit and making it easier to use are important in today's world. Malloy said that communities that are committed to energy efficiencies are moving ahead of their competition. Connecticut should do more to reduce the cost of energy.

In response to a question about the future, Mayor Malloy said that Milford is well situated to take advantage of the new economy. Development of alternative energy sources and further of transit related development will help Milford in the future.

In response to another question he said Stamford created an Energy Improvement District that was located around the center city. This allows companies within the district to band together to create energy generation to be shared.

Another question was about energy costs. Mayor Malloy said that ISO New England is a detriment to lower energy costs. He thought there was a better way to purchase electricity.

V. Guest Speakers – Chris Reardon and Bill Petrie, Workforce Alliance

Ms. Reardon said that Milford has been in Workforce Alliance's (WA) coverage area for only 5 years. She works closely with Bob Gregory on workforce issues.

Reardon said that WA works with 30 towns in the region. WA is a workforce development agency that provides services to welfare recipients, summer youths, training for job. Stimulus funds have provided an opportunity to extend their services. WA has added hours of service to their three locations. Business has gone up 45% from previous years. She said that the downside is that WA has a 75% in job orders from employers. Reardon is proud to say that WA is the number one workforce development agency in the State for 4 years.

She said that WA works with individuals, analyzes their skills, education, aptitude, and limitations and tries to address them

all. If they need additional training WA tries to improve their skills. Most of the training is in the healthcare area nowadays. WA is trying to get into the “green” jobs area.

Reardon said that there is a program using Stimulus money that rewards employers for hiring qualified certified individuals. WA will pay 50% of the salary.

WA served 280 people who live in Milford. Some were youth that were employed this summer, 35 received training scholarships to go to community colleges, and over 100 came in for information and to attend workshops.

She said that WA is now getting into providing special survival skills workshops that are open to anyone and are free. STEM is a new workshop that will guide individuals in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Reardon discussed 3 companies WA is working with. Orange Research has an incumbent worker program that is cross training their employees. Another company is Future Industries involved in suntan products received a small grant to get more into lean manufacturing. WA is now accepting applications for incumbent worker training. The last project is Whole Foods. WA and State Department of Labor provided all the recruitment and training for Whole Foods. Reardon said they are a good employer and hired a lot of their people.

She said WA is ready to work with employers and looks forward to working with Mr. Gregory.

Ms. Marquis stressed the advantage of Milford Hospital in the makeup of the City’s economy. Ms. Reardon said that she would love to work with them on job issues.

VI. New Business

Chair Salvatore announced two new Task Forces:

Energy and Environment Task Force
Job Outreach Task Force

Mr. DePalma was appointed chair of the Energy and Environment Task Force and Ms. Marquis chair of the Job Outreach Task Force.

The rest of the agenda was tabled and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert B. Gregory