

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 15, 2010

Present: Commissioners: Cyrus Settineri, John DePalma,
Robert Kapusta, Susan Patrick, Genevieve Salvatore,
Robert Stanton

Advisors: Robert Gregory, Kathy Alagno
Aldermanic Representative: Dan German
Press: Brian McCready, NH Register; Mike Majlak, Patch

- I. Chairman Settineri called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
- II. Public Comments – None
- III. Minutes - The minutes of the meeting of November 17, 2010, were approved as presented.
- IV. Guest Speaker – Harry Garafalo, owner of ShopRite

Mr. Garafalo explained the status of the food industry and the economy at the present time. Price deflation has affected the business model. More people are not eating out which is good. But they are not buying high-end items, which is bad. The customer may not go back to former buying habits when times get better.

There is a lot of competition in the Milford area for the food dollar, Garafalo said. In addition to the traditional food supermarkets, retail outlets are adding food. Target, Dollar Stores, pharmacies, Walmart and Bed, Bath and Beyond is going to add food.

He said Milford ShopRite is a family owned store with 260 employees, 25% are full time. Local 271 represents employees. They have a good working relationship with the union and provide good benefits. Mr. Garafalo said he is leery of proposed state regulations requiring paid sick leave.

He has recently purchased four other ShopRites including the West Haven, Stratford and Hamden locations. Mr. Garafalo has

invested \$5.3 million in renovations in recent years to the Milford store.

Nationally he is concerned about the estate tax.

ShopRite is a contributor to the Milford community. The senior discount program contributes \$120,000 a year. Other gifts include \$10,000 to the food bank program, \$1,200 for Rotary, \$20,000 for education, \$10,000 to United Way and \$18,000 to the Get In Touch organization.

Wayfern is the parent corporation of ShopRite. Owners must invest in the corporation and it is structured with committees that dictate policy. ShopRite allows Mr. Garafalo to be an independent grocer with a strong company behind it.

Responding to a question about the cinema site across the street, Mr. Garafalo said he would like to see a complimentary business go there.

Milford is one of the most competitive markets in the state. The new owners of the plaza have been aggressive in filling the empty spaces. A new liquor outlet will soon go in.

When asked about local products, Mr. Garafalo said that they do buy state produce and other local products.

V. Economic Development Report

Included in package.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Brokers Showcase

Mr. Settineri said planning would begin in January.

B. Business Visitation

Mr. DePalma said he had visited Home Depot and Lowe's.

C. Business Survey

Mr. Gregory said that 80 businesses had responded. The data will be summarized and ready for the January meeting.

D. Land Use and Permitting

Ms. Salvatore noted that she had heard of a positive experience with that department.

E. Plan of Conservation and Development

Ms. Patrick said that she is focusing on the Post Road and areas of concern like downtown, Devon, and Walnut Beach.

F. 10-Year Economic Development Plan

Ms. Salvatore said she has gathered a number of plans and had them distributed. She will be looking for input from the commission.

G. Shop Local – No Report

VII. Old Business

Mr. DePalma said the City should buy Harrison's property and make it into a park. Ms. Alagno said that a conversation had taken place with Alan Platus regarding an update to the downtown plan of development and that discussion of Harrison's could be part of that plan.

VIII. New Business

Chairman Settineri noted that meetings would be moved to Conference Room "C".

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert B. Gregory