

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
Minutes of the Meeting of April 22, 2020

*A virtual/telephonic meeting was held via Zoom as the result of publicly declared CoVID-19 state emergency necessitating remote meetings*

Commissioners present:

Michael Crowley, Chairman; Ani Chaghatzbanian, Vice Chair; Michael Lynch; Albert Franke; Jessica Stram; Peter Cozzolino

Advisors present:

Julie Nash; Paige Miglio, Pamela Staneski

Others present:

Alderman Greg Harla; Pam Amodio, DMBA

Commissioners & advisors not present:

John DePalma

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Crowley called the meeting to order at 12:11pm

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 22, 2020 MEETING

Mr. Franke and Mr. Lynch made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2020 meeting. Unanimously approved.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Chairman Crowley welcomed new Commissioner, Peter Cozzolino, to the meeting. Mr. Cozzolino discussed his background as owner of NAPA Auto Parts. He spoke about being a business owner in the city with 100+ employees and no layoffs since the State shut down and commented on his experience with PPP application. Discussion ensued on the impact of CoVID-9 on businesses in the community and how this Commission can help support businesses and residents.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms Amodio announced her role as new executive director of DMBA. She discussed an initiative to help members connect with customers during the shutdown. She spoke about selling T-shirts and purchase gift cards from local businesses to give to health care workers. They are also working on a Mother's Day window shopping promotion and virtualized Pirate's Day events.

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Director Nash reported on February data for unemployment and new business starts in the city. She spoke about a recent Chamber webinar on funding for businesses followed by a discussion to talk about challenges. More webinars are being planned and they are also co-hosting virtual Milford Bingo. She discussed financial support programs available to businesses: EIDL, PPP, CARES Act and reported on the influx of phone and emails from businesses that are requesting a wide range of financial support from the various programs; most expressed frustration with the slow funding response. She commented on the challenge of keeping up with rule changes for the programs and added a "Business Resources" link on Community Development Department website to provide daily updates. Businesses can also subscribe to a newsletter that has information on funding, webinars, DiscoverMilfordCT events, etc. and asked for feedback on its content. She is also working with Pam and the Chamber to keep up on information to distribute to businesses; they are trying to find creative

ideas and marketing strategies to keep businesses engaged. Discussion ensued on PPP program and challenges some banks are having with applications.

Mr. Cozzolino asked about local supplier of PPE. Director Nash suggested a local contact that is making reusable masks in the city; she asked for contact information for additional PPE resources to post on the city website. Ms Stram commented on complexity for bigger retailers once recovery phase begins. She suggested asking those essential businesses that remained open to share best practices, what they learned and put together a handbook to follow once more businesses reopen. Ms Staneski reported on plans to put together a webinar to provide tools on reopening.

## VI. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. DOWNTOWN UPDATE – None

### B. TOURISM

Ms Miglio reported revenue losses for the MAC and Pantochino during the shutdown and commented on projected losses if theater summer camps are canceled. She discussed funding options including corporate sponsorships, fundraiser, auction. She also reported on challenge of shows reopening at MAC while limiting audience capacity to 50%. They are planning several virtual programs and she provided an update on map funding, bench community art project and MAC art trail with keepsake boxes to encourage window shopping. Discussion on status of Pirate's Day, Make Music Day, fireworks and Oyster Festival.

### C. CHAMBER

Ms Staneski reported on hosting webinars on various business topics, cybersecurity, 30-minute wellness videos and more. She stated that Milford Chamber is not eligible for small business relief funding; they are working with other Chambers that are also ineligible. She announced several events: concert with Rum Runners on August 7<sup>th</sup>; UI-sponsored lunch and learns; networking webinar on May 13<sup>th</sup> and they are putting together gift baskets for first responders with donations from Wines and More. They are also collaborating with Milford Living magazine for the Best of Milford Contest in September. Ms Miglio added they are choosing a few events and focusing on doing them well.

### D. PERMIT & LAND USE – None

### E. VISITATION REPORTS – None

## VII. EDC PROJECT DISCUSSION

### A. EDC 2020 Plan – Discussion postponed to May meeting

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>

The meeting was adjourned at 1:17pm. A motion was unanimously carried to finalize the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Diamond  
Recorder