

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES of the Meeting of August 24, 2016

Present

Commissioners: Greg Harla, Chairman; Michael Lynch, Vice Chairman; John DePalma; Julie Nash, Advisor

Also present

Nell Moll, Milford Chamber of Commerce; Mike Crowley, Milford resident

Absent

Victor Ferrante; George Hunihan

- I. CALL TO ORDER - Chairman Harla called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.
- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - Mr. DePalma and Vice Chairman Lynch made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of June 22, 2016. Unanimously approved.
- III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS - Chairman Harla reported on a meeting with CT Main Street where they discussed the idea of a management system to help unify businesses downtown, serve as a liaison for visitors and oversee improvements including maintaining the area. He also met with Mayor Blake to discuss the downtown management system, vacant positions on the EDC, and plans to collaborate with various Milford organizations, businesses and committees. A discussion ensued on current goals of the EDC and posting regular press releases on EDC activities.
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS - Mr. Crowley spoke about his involvement with North Branford and Trumbull EDCs. He mentioned his interest in North Branford's "Walkabouts" where they speak to businesses about their goals to identify collective needs. He also noted the presence of an EDC booth at Milford festivals would be helpful to inform the community about what is going on in the city. Chairman Harla thanked Mr. Crowley for his input and commented on renting a booth at the Oyster Festival next year.
- V. NEW BUSINESS "MEET AND GREET" - None
- VI. CORRESPONDENCE - None
- VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY - Director Nash discussed new business data from the State of CT and commented on several new businesses opening in Milford. She reported on a recent Economic Development Roundtable event, attended by various business and organizations in Milford where they discussed goals, gaps, collaborations, assistance opportunities and action items. Future roundtables will be held on a quarterly basis with the next meeting scheduled in November. She noted the interest of attendees to be more engaged with nonprofit organizations. Ms. Noll offered the Chamber's assistance to co-host a conference of nonprofits.

VIII. STANDING ITEMS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. DOWNTOWN PARKING - Director Nash announced the TOD Planning Grant was awarded to BL Companies of CT and they are currently in contract negotiations.
 - B. CHAMBER - Ms. Moll reported on their ongoing plans to create and manage a community calendar. They hope to sell advertising space on their website to fund a Chamber position to help with the calendar and maintain an updated list of nonprofit organizations in Milford. She announced the Chamber's partnership with the City of Milford and US Small Business Administration in offering [free workshops](#) on starting a business. Ms. Moll also expressed her interest in reaching out to Women's Business Development Council to encourage women going into business and to help them research financing sources. Ms. Moll noted a request from large manufacturers to purchase local products from smaller shops in Milford and asked how they can help to make those introductions. Director Nash suggested organizing Chamber and City-industry roundtable discussions.
 - C. PERMIT & LAND USE - Director Nash made an inquiry to Milford's Planning & Zoning department, on behalf of businesses city-wide, regarding blade signs which are not allowed by zoning rules. She asked the Commission for their support in writing a formal request to P&Z for an amendment to the zoning rule to allow installation of blade signs. Unanimously approved.
 - D. VISITATION REPORT - Mr. DePalma reported on Columbus Club activities including their recognition of community members that contribute to the vibrancy of Milford.
 - E. TOURISM - None
- IX. MILFORD MARKETING PLAN RFP STATUS UPDATE - Director Nash attended the RFP presentation at Sacred Heart University. Initial data was collected during the summer semester. The project will be taken over by students this fall and the project is expected to be completed by Christmas.
- X. EDC PROJECT DISCUSSION - None
- XI. OLD BUSINESS - None
- XII. NEW BUSINESS - None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m. A motion was unanimously carried to finalize the meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Dee Diamond
Recorder