

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MINUTES – Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 4, 2021, 5:00 P.M.
First Floor Meeting Room, City Hall

ATTENDEES: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu, Council Member Preleski, Commissioner Mills, Hick, Schmelder, Goldwasser, Cyr, Rasmussen-Tuller, Zammett

ABSENT: - - -

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Nielsen, Marketing & Public Relations
Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator, Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner

GUESTS: Charles Talmadge, Development Planning Solutions, LLC
Gino Carrier, Carrier Construction, Inc.
Paul Brand, GM2, Inc.
Richard Armstrong, GM2, Inc.
Diana Gonzalez, CT Ears, LLC

I. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. Public Participation – There was no public participation.

Upon Motion Commissioner Schmelder, seconded by Commissioner Zammett, board proceeded to Item VIII. B.

VIII. Any Other Business

B. Downtown Committee

Commissioner Goldwasser summarized what transpired at the last two Downtown Committee meetings. The committee met again on February 11 and Mr. Gino Carrier from Carrier Construction, along with Mr. Talmadge are here tonight. Mr. Talmadge spoke about the project and showed a revised draft of the layout for the buildings on the project site. Changes were made because of the feedback which was received from this board.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to recommend that the City Council authorize the Mayor or Acting Mayor to execute, subject to the approval of Corporation Counsel, a Letter of Intent with Carrier Construction, Inc. or its assigns for exclusive rights to Parcel 5, Parcel 6, Parcel 7, and Parcel 8 as indicated on the map known as “Centre Square Resubdivision” dated June 5, 2017 to allow due diligence and pre-development work on a large mixed-use development that includes approximately 90 market rate apartments and commercial space for rent, and to forward to the City Council and Office of Corporation Counsel for review.

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller seconded the motion.

Discussion. Commissioner Schmelder inquired if there was an end date to the Letter of Intent. Justin reported that the Letter of Intent provides for a one-year time frame and allows for some extension.

Commissioner Goldwasser amended his motion to add that the Letter of Intent will expire in one year. Motion was seconded.

Discussion on other related matters:

- First, parking was discussed – will it be gated, is that necessary, will shared parking be allowed. Mr. Talmadge said it would not be gated and the Mayor explained that at this time it was not believed to be an issue with available parking spaces.
- Commissioner Mills expressed concern about the esthetics with regard to future commercial tenants, i.e., restaurants and related external features such as dumpsters. The Mayor confirmed

this would be part of the discussion going forward.

- Daniel Sutula, 135 Debra Lane, Bristol, who is the real estate officer for the Bristol Development Agency, expressed concern about the parking spaces provided on Lot 6 per past agreement and wanted to ensure all needed spaces for the post office employees and users are still made available. The Mayor confirmed her conversations with the Post Office and the tentative plan which has been put forward to address this. She has also spoken to Congressman Larson's office to ensure that the City will address this to the key federal contact representing the post office. The Corporation Counsel office is being consulted for review.

All Commissioners present voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mr. Talmadge asked that anyone who has additional questions or comments to please forward them to Justin and he will share them with him.

III. **Commissioner Mills made a motion to accept the minutes of February 4, 2021, seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. The commissioners voted in favor and the minutes were accepted.**

IV. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to file the Consent Agenda seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

V. New Business

A. Route 72 Streetscape Presentation

Representatives of GM2, Inc. joined the meeting online and were introduced by Justin Malley, who explained the area of the proposed streetscape project the City is looking to undertake.

GM2 has completed a study of the Route 72 area with recommendations for streetscape improvements. Richard Armstrong made a brief presentation, reviewed the project and answered questions. They are looking for the City's suggestions on pedestrian and roadway safety. Approval is needed from the State for the work that will be done on State roads. He discussed maintenance responsibilities and esthetic improvements.

Justin spoke about the City's role in working with the businesses along the project route. General discussion followed. The next steps will be to request funding and partner with the Public Works department.

B. Southeast Bristol Business Park Update

Justin introduced this subject which was initially presented to the board in December of 2020. Bob Desmarais had 90 days to present his draft for the layout of his intended project for lots 8 and 9 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park. Justin summarized Mr. Desmarais' plans for the property.

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Schmelder, to recommend that the City Council authorize Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, or Acting Mayor, to execute a Letter of Intent, subject to the approval of Corporation Counsel, with SE Middle LLC, or its assigns, for the sale of Lot #8 and Lot #9 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park for purposes of constructing up to three (3) industrial/distribution buildings of up to 28,000 square feet in total, and to forward to the City Council and Office of Corporation Counsel for review.

Justin answered questions. They will follow the Southeast Bristol Business Park Guidelines. Timeline: They would like to build the first building by the end of the year.
All commissioners voted in favor and the motion was passed.

C. Urban Act Request 2021

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu reported that this will go to the State of Connecticut next year. Justin provided background on our funding requests in the past which we did not receive. Now, with parking plans, we are looking to apply again as this would tie into private development. We also are looking to provide a central gathering space. The funding request will be for both parking and a City green.

The Mayor explained the application process and described our parking needs for both City Hall and the Post Office.

D. Marketing Update and Funding Request

Marketing Update: Dawn Nielsen reported that the Farmers Market will be relocated and will be on Lot 4 across from Hope Street so that the community will get used to the new location. We will also be adding new vendors and last year's vendors have been contacted to see who will be coming back. We can accommodate up to 24. We do not want to remove the COVID testing site as they need to be there throughout the summer and they need electricity.

Transfer Request: Justin reported that we will continue with the business videos and feature some more established businesses. Dawn Nielsen provided a description of what is planned. Funds are needed to enable us to produce and distribute these videos.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve a request for transfer of \$15,000 from the Economic Development Expenses account to the Marketing Video Project account and to approve a request to transfer \$5,000 from the Economic Development Expenses account to the Farmers Market Program Supplies account and to forward to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

E. Project Status Updates – There were no updates this month.

F. CDBG Report

Dawn Leger reported that we have received notice of the amount of the CDBG allocation for this coming year – it will be \$653,957. The Policy Committee meets on this coming Monday to review the applications.

Dawn Leger read into the record the letter she is sending to HUD reporting the Conflict of Interest.

Conflict of Interest Declaration for CDBG Year 47

March 4, 2021

In accordance with HUD regulations concerning Conflicts of Interest, there are four individuals who have submitted statements concerning a Conflict of Interest with an applicant for CDBG funding. They are Councilman David Preleski (who serves as the City Council member of the ECD Board), Councilwoman Mary Fortier, Councilman Scott Rosado, and ECD Board member David Mills.

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu continues to have the same conflict that was presented for review previously (she is the Chair of the Public Works Board, which is an applicant for CDBG funding), but because it was determined by HUD that “her interests do not pose any conflict under the relevant regulations,” we are not presenting her case for review again this year.

This letter serves as notification that both Councilwoman Fortier and Councilman Rosado have been advised to recuse themselves from any votes taken by the City Council that directly involve the approval of awards to the agency with which they have an association for the program year 47.

ECD Board member David Mills indicated in his COI form that although he has served on the Board of Directors of the Bristol Boys & Girls Club and the ImagineNation Museum Early Learning Center, he is in the process of resigning from those boards and will not be a member at the time when votes will be taken for the allocation of CDBG funds. Therefore, he will not need an exception from HUD.

The City of Bristol is requesting an exception for Atty. David Preleski. Attorney Preleski is a partner in the law firm Vitrano, Preleski, & Wynn. He receives income from legal representation provided to the Bristol Housing Authority, which is an applicant for CDBG funding, by a member of the firm, Atty. Salvatore Vitrano. Atty. Preleski is a member of the Bristol City Council who also serves as a member of the ECD Board. He is not a member of the CDBG Policy Committee and has no role in the selection of applicants to receive allocations of CDBG funds in 2021-22.

Atty. Preleski must recuse himself from all discussions and voting on the CDBG allocations for Year 47.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Cyr inquired if there was to be stamping on the Main Street pavement. Justin replied that Carrier is interested in continuing the streetscape in the area of their project on Main St. Commissioner Cyr also asked if something could be done in a few areas which would highlight Bristol All Heart (with stamps).

VII. Old Business by Commissioners – There was no old business by commissioners.

VIII. Any Other Business

A. City Council Liaison Report – Council Member Preleski

- Council Member Preleski reported that construction was proceeding on the Memorial Boulevard Arts Magnet School project and was currently on schedule. He recommended a useful podcast on this subject via the Bristol Press website. There will be a community forum on March 25 which will provide an update on the project.
- He then showed an artist rendering of the Page Park master plan redesign which shows increased accessibility.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu excused herself from the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner Schmelder continued as Chair.

Upon motion Commissioner Goldwasser, seconded by Commissioner Hick, the board went into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

IX. Executive Session

Commissioner Mills excused himself at 6:40 p.m.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hick and seconded by Commissioner Schmelder to come out of Executive Session and reconvene board meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Commissioner Hick excused himself at 6:55 p.m.

No votes were taken in Executive Session.

A. Economic Development Grant Application

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to approve a Downtown Grant in the amount of up to \$49,206 to CT Ears LLC representing up to \$46,206 for the purchase and installation of a sound room/booth at 440 North Main Street and up to \$3,000 for the creation of up to three (3) new full-time positions in downtown Bristol. As part of this approval, the ECD board requires that the sound room/booth associated with this project must remain in the downtown Bristol area as designated by Census Tract 4061 in the event CT Ears LLC relocates to another location. Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Council Member Preleski. Meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Cooper,
Recording Secretary