

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 1, 2023 5:00pm
City Hall West Meeting Room #1

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Council Member Panioto, Commissioners Schmelder (Zoom), Hick, Massarelli, Verikas (Zoom), Goldwasser (Zoom), and Rasmussen-Tuller.

ABSENT: Commissioner David Mills, Andrew Armstrong, Assistant City Planner

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dr. Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator, Dawn Nielsen, Marketing and PR Specialist, Sharon Arsego, Sr. Admin. Assistant

GUESTS: Kim Holley, Director of BristolWORKS!
Ray Rogozinski, Public Works Director, City of Bristol, CT
Present on Zoom:
Alex Donovan, Owner and Operator of (a)squaredstudio Web Design & Graphic Design
Tim Carr, Principal at Down to Earth, LLC
Sal Hukic, Owner of BHF Logistics, Inc.

I. **Call to Order**

Mayor Caggiano began the meeting at 5:00PM and led the room in The Pledge of Allegiance.

II. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation

III. **Minutes: May 4, 2023**

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to approve the May 4, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner Massarelli made the motion which was seconded by Council Member Panioto. No changes or questions were presented for the minutes. All voted in favor to accept the minutes and they were moved into the record.

IV. **Consent Agenda**

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made the motion which was seconded by Council Member Panioto. No changes or questions were presented for the Consent Agenda. All voted in favor to accept the Consent Agenda and it was moved into the record.

V. **New Business**

A. All Heart Website

Justin Malley introduced Alex Donovan, Owner and Operator of (a)squaredstudio Web Design & Graphic Design. Dawn Nielsen advised the Board that Alex would be presenting visual updates on the new website design. Key features include how to become involved in events, Bristol Neighborhood maps, and information specific to those neighborhoods. Businesses will be able to complete an online form to add their information to the site. Streamlining efforts for the public and the ECD staff remains

key to the project. Commissioners Verikas and Goldwasser asked about sign-up options. Alex highlighted where those options were on the site. Commissioner Schmelder suggested a beta test session before the site is rolled out live.

Dawn Nielsen followed the discussion with an update on the day of filming in the city. The videos from that day will be used to enhance the website and additional marketing.

B. BristolWORKS! Update

Justin Malley introduced Kim Holley, Director of BristolWORKS! to provide an update on enrollment and the overall program. This is an ARPA Grant Funded program. Training is completely free of charge for Bristol residents. Non-Bristol residents are only charged for books and assessments. The majority of students are from Bristol. Local manufacturers are excited about the manufacturing program.

BristolWORKS! is partnered with Tunxis Community College with credits and continuing education. The IT program is expanding from 24-hours to 48 hours. Early Childhood Education is an accelerated program. Resume and job application help, soft skills and job re-entry workshops are also offered. Commissioner Hick complimented the BristolWORKS! marketing video viewed on social media. Justin Malley praised the program and how transformative it is to individuals and businesses.

C. 894 Middle Street

Justin Malley introduced Tim Carr, Principal at Down to Earth, LLC and Ray Rogozinski, Public Works Director, City of Bristol, CT in response to Commissioner Hick's question about this site at a previous meeting. Ground water wells have been monitored for the last four (4) quarters. Most of the wells read appropriately now. A couple are improving but not yet eligible to be capped.

Justin presented two options for this site at this juncture:

1. Continue to monitor the wells and hold off marketing the site for sale until it is clean – time table unknown
2. Market the site for sale as a brownfield site with continued city monitoring. An RFP for bids would be put into place.

Commissioner Goldwasser suggested that marketing start now to gauge interest. Tim Carr continued the discussion stating development would be the final remedy, and to start marketing the property now. This land has an approved Environmental Land Use Restriction in place as of September 2022 which is a plus for the property.

Commissioner Schmelder asked about land value when marketing it with environmental issues. Tim Carr emphasized that the Brownfield Grant funding has improved the situation as without it, the land would have been unusable. Commissioner Schmelder expressed approval to market the property now. Commissioner Goldwasser noted entrepreneurs will find ways to make the most of this opportunity.

Mayor Caggiano asked what the City's continuing obligations are for this location. Tim Carr noted those are ground water testing, and notifying the EPA of redevelopment and who the responsible parties are. Further discussion about the property value from selling or leasing continued. Justin Malley directed the Board to their meeting packets for development ideas as provided by BL Companies. Location, traffic counts, proximity to businesses and the highway, and the site acreage were discussed as assets to marketing for development.

A motion on 894 Middle Street was put forward by Commissioner Goldwasser as follows:

Motion to allow staff to complete and request proposals on the site which will be given to the Board for review and approval.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick. There were no further comments or questions. All were in favor and the motion was moved into the record.

Mayor Caggiano asked to make a motion to move **V. New Business F. Industrial Parks Update** up in the agenda to best accommodate meeting guest Sal Hukic, Owner of BHF Logistics, Inc. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion passed.

F. Industrial Parks Update

Sal Hukic advised that his business model had changed, mostly due to his larger clients moving to online since Covid. The building is approximately 75% completed, there are prospective buyers for it, and he is working with Justin Malley to find a more suitable property for his company.

Justin led the discussion about the previously awarded grant and guidelines the new owners will need to adhere to. Commissioner Schmelder noted willingness to work with BHL Logistics to find a new Bristol location and someone for the existing property. Further discussion continued about the land's possible use and interest. Justin Malley confirmed the need to meet with Corporation Counsel and Land Use due to the change in plans. Sal thanked the Board for their time and assistance.

In an additional update, Justin Malley noted that 70 Horizon Drive is for sale within 229 Technology Park. There is interest from a perfumer in the state. They're family owned, 100% of the employees have science degrees and 50% have PhDs. They're a biotech company with over 100 employees. More information will be presented at a future meeting. Discussion continued about moving the employees from their current location to Bristol.

D. BOF Transfer

Justin Malley prefaced the BOF Transfer request of \$200,000 as additional funds needed to cover four (4) grant discussions that could all come in at once, and the account wouldn't cover them at their max if they did. These could potentially be converted to the Revolving Loan Program but that isn't fully in place yet.

Commissioner Hick read the following motion:

To transfer \$200,000 from the ECD Economic Development Expenses account 1044109-589300 to the ECD "Downtown Grants" account 1044109-589320.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Panioto. There were no further comments or questions. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

Justin Malley prefaced the next motion as end of year transfers and close outs.

Commissioner Hick read the following motion:

To transfer \$6,300.00 from the ECD Conferences & Memberships account 1044101-581120-G2023 and distribute as follows:

\$150.00 to 1044101-561800-G2023 Program Supplies
\$150.00 to 1044101-569000-G2023 Office Supplies, and
\$6,000.00 to 1044101-531000-G2023 Professional Fees & Services

Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion. There were no further comments or questions. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

Commissioner Goldwasser gave his apologies as he needed to leave the meeting early.

E. Downtown Update

Justin Malley introduced Golden Years, an established homemaking and companion business with an adult day care center currently based in Plainville, CT. They currently have 25 in office employees and over 100 home health care aids within individual assignments. She's purchased 118 Main Street in Bristol and needs a kitchen for the adult day care center and meal delivery to home bound clients.

Justin also advised the Board that a new restaurant is moving downtown with 10 existing locations in Connecticut. The closing is scheduled for July.

Mayor Caggiano advised that the Carrier Company goes before Zoning on June 12, 2023 with the closing on June 13, 2023. He also addressed the Funck & Eagle building originally planned for housing. Parking and State regulations are restricting their original plan. The first floor would be retail with self-storage for the four floors above. Discussion about this change in plans continued though more details are forthcoming. Justin Malley has advised Carrier that the previously approved tax abatement for the original development plan is no longer applicable. This can be revisited when they present the new plans in full.

Commissioner Schmelder asked about the Chic Miller property. Mayor Caggiano said that site and other dealerships are being monitored and addressed for blight issues. Corporation Counsel has reached out to Justin Malley to discuss the Chic Miller site.

Commissioner Hick asked if the grid company bought their building and Justin Malley confirmed that they do own it. It is a blighted building that needs to be addressed.

VI. **New Business by Commissioners**

No new business was presented.

VII. **Old Business by Commissioners**

No old business was presented.

VIII. **Committee Reports**

A. City Council Member Report

No report was presented.

IX. **Adjournment**

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Massarelli seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all and the meeting adjourned at 6:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary