

## **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 5:00pm

City Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street & on Zoom

**Present:** Mayor Zoppo-Sassu, Chair; Howard Schmelder, Vice Chair; Council Member Susan Tyler, and Commissioners Marvin (Mickey) Goldwasser, Dave Mills, Tom Hick, Louise Provenzano, LaQuita Kearney-Gonzalez (Zoom), and John Paul Sirko

**Absent:** None

**ECD Staff:** Justin Malley - Executive Director and Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator

**Guests:** Charlie Talmadge, President of Development Planning Solutions  
Bhrugesh Patel, Owner/Developer of 40 West Street, Bristol

### **I. Call to Order**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **II. Public Participation**

Charlie Talmadge provided the Board with a progress update for 40 West Street, also known as the former Chic Miller location. Highlights included that half of the building has been removed and about three weeks of demolition remain.

The design team for 40 West Street recently met. The plan is to build 120 market rate residential units with a small commercial space and parking. Any signage from the former Chic Miller site was not salvageable due to the nature of the materials. Mr. Talmadge thanked the Board for their role and partnership on this project, and Mr. Patel for his investment in the location.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu noted that property taxes have continued to be paid over the past 17 years, and taxes from a project of this size will be significant to the City's Grand List going forward. Mr. Talmadge said their timeline goals are to submit to Land Use by the end of 2026, and break ground in the Spring of 2027.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

#### **A. Minutes of the April 2, 2026 Regular Meeting**

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 2, 2026 Regular Meeting. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Vice Chair Schmelder. There were no updates to the Minutes as presented. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record. Commissioner Mills abstained from the vote as he was absent from the April meeting.

### **IV. Consent Agenda**

#### **A. Communications**

#### **B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report**

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and seconded by Vice Chair Schmelder. There was no discussion on the Consent Agenda as presented. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

### **V. New Business**

#### **A. Downtown Update**

Justin Malley advised the Board that a marketing video is in progress, designed to raise awareness of downtown parking options. The ECD Staff are working with Public Works on providing physical parking/directional signs. The Vice Chair asked for clarification on the current streetscape work being done on N. Main Street and was advised that project will create 19 additional parking spaces. Paving will cap off the road work and parking space project. Discussion around signage and the parking garage followed.

The ECD Staff is in communication with the JHM Group as the preferred developer for the J. H. Sessions property. The developer brought on a historical consultant and started discussions with the State's Historical Preservations Office. Designating the building as historic provides funding options, and the Historical Preservations Office dictates how the building can be developed as a historic site.

Justin Malley and Mayor Zoppo-Sassu have spoken with a new restaurant that is poised to take over Main Street Pint and Plate. Additional details will be released as allowable. It was noted that the Board may see information shared out on social media via the businesses in the meantime.

## **B. Additional Development Projects**

The mayor advised the Board that Connecticut's Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz is scheduled to visit Bristol next week regarding the Community Connectivity Grant that Bristol was awarded. Connecticut DOT Commissioner Garrett T. Eucalitto will also be in attendance. The mayor is using this opportunity to discuss other DOT related issues in the city, including the gateway to Route 72.

Previously shared concerns about promotion and overall support with The Giamatti Little League Center's summer tournaments are being addressed. Justin Malley, Mayor Zoppo-Sassu and the Director of Tournaments, Aaron Weber, met and community connections were initiated, including with Lake Compounce and local hotels.

Discussion around the tournament followed including signage, and the opportunity the event provides to positively promote the city's broad points of interest. Board members were encouraged to bring additional ideas to the ECD Staff for consideration.

Both Integrity Manufacturing and RCSS continue to make progress with their design plans for Lots #3 and #8, respectively, in the Southeast Bristol Business Park (SEBBP).

The new owners of 383 Middle Street are expected to close on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. The mayor expressed her appreciation for the ECD Director's role and the good relationships that were fostered as they were of significant help with this particular development deal.

IDEX Health and Sciences on Halcyon Drive has announced it's closing their Bristol location as part of a corporate decision that includes other locations as well. The Bristol site is noted to employ 70 people.

## **C. BOF Transfer Request**

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Board of Finance (BOF) Transfer Request in the amount of \$17,950.00 in between Wage line items as noted for the Board. The motion was made by Commissioner Provenzano and seconded by Commissioner Hick. There were no questions related to the BOF Transfer Request. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

*Note: The BOF Transfer is for funds from ECD "Regular Wages" to ECD "Other Wages". With the Motion passed, the request will now be referred to the Board of Finance for action.*

#### **D. NAA Applicants**

Vice Chair Schmelder reported that the required Public Hearing for the NAA Applicants process was held that evening ahead of the ECD Board Meeting. No members of the public were in attendance at the hearing, and action will be taken to forward the information from the applicants to the proper agency. This concludes the ECD Department's requirements in compliance with the statute as a pass through for this State program.

The ECD Staff provided a brief review of the NAA Program noting that it provides nonprofits with an opportunity to seek funding through corporations by way of tax credits. This funding is then used for a variety of programs and projects for the community.

Vice Chair Schmelder read the following proposed motion:

*Motion to forward the list of the Bristol organizations applying for the 2026 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program to the City Council for approval and authorized submission of these applications to the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services for action.*

There was no further discussion. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mills. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

#### **E. Marketing & Budget Update**

Justin Malley spoke about the ECD budget change for the coming Fiscal Year. A reduction in the budget since the Board approved it was attributed to the decision not fill the currently vacant full-time marketing position left open after the retirement was taken.

While the Board approved budget originally included the position, with the position removed, the budget has been reduced from \$542,118.00 to \$397,145.00. It was noted that discussions are taking place on how to best continue supporting City wide marketing initiatives.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds comprise the second half of the ECD Fiscal Year budget and those numbers remain unchanged. The ECD Department has also received notice of the funding award amount for Fiscal Year 52.

The mayor called for a motion to approve and place on file the Marketing and Budget Report. The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Commissioner Mills. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

**VI. New Business by Commissioners**

There was no New Business by Commissioners.

**VII. Old Business by Commissioners**

Commissioner Hick asked about the building next to the former Marilyn's Restaurant. ECD Staff reported that Trumpf, based in Farmington, occupies storage space there, a company that had previously been in the tower piece may return to it, and the building's owners are renovating after having completed an environmental cleanup. That cleanup was done with the aid of funding from the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG). Further discussion regarding the renovations followed.

Commissioner Mills inquired about the former Marilyn's Restaurant location itself, which, at this time remains listed for sale. Vice Chair Schmelder inquired about the parking lot on Frederick Street, and 150 Central Street as also discussed. The parking lot is being cleaned up by the property owners, and 150 Central Street continues to be monitored as part of the environmental cleanup process.

The mayor shared that a meeting held the previous week with Justin Malley, City Council Member Tyler, and the site developer present to address resident's concerns about the micro cloud technology building on Riverside Avenue. The main concerns expressed were about water intake and output, heat imprint, noise, and the site's affect to energy rates.

Discussion followed, including why the project is tax exempt and the Pilot Program portion of the development. It should be noted that both the tax exemption and the Pilot Program are authorized by the State of Connecticut.

The mayor shared that the Citizen's Academy had started and the first stop was at the Water and Sewer Department. Those in attendance showed great interest in the

information they received and were engaged in the process. ECD Department hosts the Citizen's Academy on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 with assistance from Vice Chair Schmelder.

## **VIII. Committee Reports**

### **A. CDBG Policy Committee**

Dr. Dawn Leger announced that the FY52 Action Plan is available online for review and is incomplete while as sections by the Community Services Division of Parks and Recreation, Youth and Community Services, and the Housing Authority are being reviewed.

There is a CDBG Public Hearing on Wednesday, May 13, 2026 followed by a Public Comment Period from May 13<sup>th</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>. The report is an important document because the city is required to follow a plan, and the City's allocations and the impact of the money that is distributed is audited by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It was noted that the CDBG funds are limited and the CDBG Committee focused on their first priority which is homelessness.

Vice Chair Schmelder read the following proposed motion:

*To approve the CDBG Annual Action Plan for Program Year 52, 2026-2027 for the City of Bristol as recommended by the CDBG Policy Committee, and to refer this recommendation to the City Council and Board of Finance for action.*

For the record, Commissioner Provenzano noted an amendment to the CDBG FY52 fund allocations as follows: \$500.00 was moved back to the Bristol Boys & Girls Club (BBGC) grant award amount which brought their total to \$20,000.00. Upon review of the grant funding and allocations, the Committee noted that the movement of the \$500.00 away from the BBGC award to fulfill another request wasn't needed which is why it was returned to the original award.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. With no further discussion or comments, all were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

### **B. Downtown Committee**

Commissioner Goldwasser reported on the Downtown Committee Meeting held on May 4, 2026. The meeting included an Executive Session to interview developers who had responded to the City's RFPs for the 1.35 acres on Centre Square. While

specifics about developers and their proposals remain confidential at this time, it was noted that both developers acknowledge the parking issue and have included that in their plans.

ECD Staff has feedback from the Committee which will be taken back to the developers. Additional Committee meetings will be scheduled as needed. Commissioner Goldwasser noted both developers presented good options and two different approaches.

A motion to accept the Downtown Committee Report was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

### **C. City Council Member Report**

City Council Member Tyler thanks Commissioner Goldwasser for providing a Mum Festival contact for her to share with business owners as needed. She also expressed thanks for steps taken to address the Giamatti Little League Tournament concerns.

Additional items of note included the second anniversary of the Factory Collective, formerly New Cambridge Project and Firefly Brewing. Wojtusik Nursery celebrated 70 years in business, and tenants have started moving in at the new offices at 291 Queen Street.

The Council Member expressed how important it is to business owners when ECD Commissioners attend events and openings, and she has received positive feedback from the businesses as a result.

Vice Chair Schmelder praised the efforts of the student news report conducted by Bristol Eastern High School that aired on Fox 61. He noted the coverage was excellent and included interviews as well as showcasing the vendor spaces.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu referenced Cinco de Mayo celebrations on N. Main Street with Guac 'n Roll, Monterrey, Ventanas, and Latin Cravings seeing increased patronage and foot traffic for the holiday. Part of Hope Street was also allotted for a block party.

## **IX. Adjournment**

With no further discussion, the mayor called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:50pm

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Sharon Arsego*

*Recording Secretary*