



City of Bristol
Economic and Community Development Board
INFORMATION TO ACCESS THIS MEETING

<https://bristolct-gov.zoom.us/j/88677210794?pwd=M2xITXBOVIRsSDROR1VlSmtnbmdudz09>

Meeting ID: 886 7721 0794

Passcode: 379107

The Regular ECD Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 5:00pm in Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 North Main Street, Bristol, CT.

- I Call to Order
- II Public Participation
- III Approval of Minutes
 - A. [Minutes: May 2, 2024](#)
- IV Consent Agenda
 - A. [Communications](#)
 - B. [Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report](#)
- V New Business
 - A. Façade Program Grant Application – 238 Main Street
 - B. [City & Town Development Act](#)
 - C. SEBBP Update
 - D. Incentives Update
 - E. Downtown Update
- VI New Business By Commissioners

VII Old Business by Commissioners

VIII Committee Reports

A. Downtown Committee Report

B. CDBG Policy Committee Report

C. City Council Member Report

IX Adjournment

PER ORDER OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Jeff Caggiano
Mayor

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting

Thursday May 2, 2024 5:00pm

Meeting Room 1-3, 111 N. Main Street and on Zoom

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Council Member Panioto, Commissioners Hicks, Goldwasser, Mills, Schmelder, Provenzano, Rasmussen-Tuller, and Verikas (Zoom)

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley- Executive Director, Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator, Dawn Nielsen-Marketing & Public Relations Specialist, and Andrew Armstrong – Assistant City Planner/Dev. Coordinator for Public Works.

GUESTS:

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:00pm, and led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

III. Minutes: April 4, 2024

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the April 4, 2024 Board Meeting.

The motion to approve and file the minutes was put forward by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

The motion was put forward by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All were in favor and the motion was accepted to the record.

V. New Business

A. 273 Riverside Avenue RFP

Justin Malley gave an update on the Riverside RFP. He stated the City received 8 proposals, with six that are solid proposals. More studios and one-bedroom units. These proposals show 65-80 units, more focused on single renters or young couples. The building is not yet designated as historic but it can be and can receive funding for the project. They also include the old Hostess building across the street for parking or even rebuilding a smaller residential unit across the street.

Justin Malley shared the next steps; Goman and York will deliver their rating system and will give a list of developers that will be able to see the project through with experience and funding.

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to move Item 5D up for discussion.

The motion to move Item 5D up was made by Commissioner Hicks and seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. All were in favor and the motion passed.

D. SEBBP Update

Justin Malley explained how the Board approved amending the Business Park regulations to allow a vocational school. A letter was sent to surrounding businesses, with the understanding that if we do not get a response then that is considered an approval. He asked if the Board was fine entering an agreement of Sale with Allstate Trucking.

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to approve pending conclusion of the mandatory 60-day response period offered to property owners in the Southeast Bristol Business Park concerning proposed modifications to the Southeast Bristol Business Park Design Guidelines approved by the ECD Board on March 7, 2024, and having received no votes in opposition; the following motion was made by Commissioner Goldswasser and seconded by Commissioner Mills:

The motion to authorize Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano, or Acting Mayor, to execute a Purchase and Sale Agreement and to complete the property transaction, subject to the approval of Corporation Counsel, with Business Park Avenue, LLC or its assigns, doing business as Allstate Commercial Driver Training School, for the sale of the Southeast Bristol Business Park property known as "Lot 10 and Lot #11" as reflected on the map known as *Boundary Survey* from Dufour Surveying LLC dated May 6, 2022 and *Lot Line Revision Map Lots 10, 11, and 12* dated February 26, 2015 for the purchase price of \$275,000.

I further move that this matter be referred to the City Council, Planning Commission for completion of a C.G.S. 8-24 Report, and to the City Council Real Estate Committee for

completion of a C.G.S. 7-163e Public Hearing for the sale of municipally owned property.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

Justin Malley provided an update on Ecosmart, a company that has decided to move on. Therefore Lot 6 is available for sale again.

Justin Malley shared that the owner of Lot #8 had also purchased land and had missed his deadline for action. Mr. Malley has reached out to the owner to see what is needed to move the project forward.

B. Farmers Market 2024

Dawn Nielsen shared a report on the farmers market:

The Bristol Farmers Market Report for the May 2, 2024 ECD Board Meeting

The Bristol Farmers Market is now its own nonprofit entity. The mission of The Bristol Farmers Market, Inc. is to create a sustainable platform that supports and promotes access to fresh local food and products for all residents. By connecting the community with local farmers and producers, the market aims to foster a thriving environment for both vendors and patrons.

We worked with an Attorney to get registered as a nonprofit with the State of CT and are awaiting word on our 501c3 designation from the IRS which is expected in the next couple of weeks.

As of May 1st we have \$6,600 in committed sponsorships with a goal of \$10,000 for the 2024 season.

We have received grants in the amount of \$4,000 and have applied for two grants to allow us to double the SNAP/EBT benefits that have been offered at the market for the last several years, which was administered by the BPRYCS department and will now be administered by us. WIC and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition vouchers will also continue to be accepted at this year's market. We are looking into bringing a nutritionist to the market one or two times during the season to do a cooking demonstration to show the community how to use the fresh produce they purchase to make healthy meals.

A website is in the process of being created and will be ready in time for the beginning of the season so we can list the vendors, weekly entertainment, and other information about the market. We're working on other marketing efforts as well to help get the word out.

We have several returning vendors joining us again this season and are accepting applications until May 3rd.

As the Board of Directors Chair, I am asking this Board to support this new nonprofit by following us on social media and inviting those you are friends with to follow us as well – both Facebook and Instagram – and sharing the news about the market for this season. The market will open on June 22nd and run every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm in a new location: in the parking lot of 10 Main Street. We are partnering with the owners of 10 Main (D’Amato Construction) who are allowing us to hold the market in their parking lot. We’ll use signage to direct people to the market on Saturdays.

C. Marketing Update

Dawn Nielsen shared an update on the Bristol All Heart Website and the new way that the City Website will guide you to the All Heart Website. Businesses can request to post jobs and residents can now job search on the All Heart site. She shared how they now have an e-newsletter as well. Residents can also post events on the All Heart site.

D. CDBG Update and Conflict Interest Procedure

Dr. Dawn Leger read into Record the Following statement

Conflict of Interest Declaration for CDBG Year 50 – Addendum - May 2, 2024

In accordance with HUD regulations concerning Conflicts of Interest, there is one additional individual with a Conflict of Interest that I am required to read into the record of these proceedings: Councilwoman Cheryl Thibeault presently serves on the Board of Directors of Grace Baptist Church, and she has been advised to recuse herself from any votes taken by the City Council that directly involve the approval of awards to that agency.

Additionally, Dr. Leger noted that the City has not heard from HUD about the CDBG allocation for Year 50 yet. This is very later and the delay is impacting agencies who are waiting to see if they receive grants in the coming year.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

A. Neighborhood Assistance Program

Mayor Caggiano entertained a motion to approve the organizations that applied for the 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Program and refer to the City Council for approval at its May 14, 2024 meeting.

Commissioner Schmelder made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Hick, to approve the organizations that applied for the 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Program and refer them to the City Council for approval at its May 14, 2024 meeting; Commissioner Schmelder asked to waive the reading of the list and attach it to the referral. Council Member Panioto recused himself from the vote and left the room. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The 2024 NAA Applicants for Bristol are:

1. Boys & Girls Club of Bristol (Energy Sustainability - \$96,300)

2. Bristol Historical Society (Energy efficiency repointing - \$150,000)
3. The Family Center, Inc./ dba ImagineNation, A Museum Early Learning Center (Imagining Healthy Futures - \$100,467.87)
4. Greater Bristol Homes Co. (West End Phase I - \$150,000)
5. Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA) – (Energy Remodel for Lake Avenue Family Center - \$75,000)
6. New England Carousel Museum Inc. (Energy Conservation - \$150,000)
7. Nutmeg Symphony Orchestra (Concert Series/Educational Children's Concerts - \$64,460)
8. Prudence Crandall Center Inc. (Annual Appeal - \$150,000)
9. Prudence Crandall Center Inc. (Energy Efficiency - \$42,060)
10. Shepard Meadows Equestrian Center (Telecommunications/Intranet/Safety & Security - \$75,000)
11. United Way of West Central CT (Neighbors in Need - \$125,000)

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Goldwasser inquired about Kenwood Cleaners. Justin Malley stated that the owner of a business occupant for the building also purchased the building. It seems the building owner is foreclosing and the Roosters project may not materialize. In the second unit, the tenant was the previous owner's tenant and may be leaving soon as well.

The Commission discussed the Mellen Street Bridge which is near completion. The next bridge being worked on will be the East Street Bridge, and Sawe's Automotive will be impacted there.

The Commission also discussed the Jerome Avenue Bridge along with detour issues and businesses being affected. A sign has been put in place regarding the Wine and Spirits Store and BARC's Hidden Café.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. City Council Member Report/update

Nothing to report

IX. Adjournment

There was no further discussion. The Mayor entertained a motion to adjourn which was made by Commissioner Schmelder and seconded by Commissioner Hicks. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Little
Recording Secretary



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business until Friday, May 17
Voting Period will Follow
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VOL. 153 NO. 110

BRISTOLPRESS.COM

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024

\$2.00

The Bristol Press

Serving the Communities of Central Connecticut



Brian M. Johnson
Plymouth Mayor
Joe Kilduff

New downtown plan hearing May 22

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — The Community Investment Ad Hoc Committee will present the draft Downtown Transformational Plan and hear input from the public May 22 at Terryville High School.

The public engagement session will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of the high school at 33 N. Harwinton Ave. Kilduff and the committee members will go over results from a community survey along with research and data that was gathered and discuss what downtown renovations might look like. Refreshments will be served.

Last spring, Plymouth was approved for a \$250,000 state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant to develop the "Downtown

See PLAN ON PAGE 4

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Drive-In pavilion gets new name

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

SOUTHINGTON — The Town Council has renamed the pavilion at the Southington Drive-In in memory of the late Joe LaPorte, a dedicated community volunteer who died at 90 on March 30.

LaPorte and several volunteers worked to build the pavilion at the drive-in at

995 Meriden-Waterbury Turnpike, which began construction in 2010. At Monday's meeting, the Town Council voted to rename it in his memory.

Mike DelSanto, vice chair of the Southington Town Council, spearheaded the efforts to recognize LaPorte, who he said volunteered with the local Parks Commission for

See LAPORTE ON PAGE 4



The Town of Southington

The Pavillion at the Southington Drive-In, which is renamed after Joe LaPorte.

'Brew'-tiful bar



Brian M. Johnson

Mayor Jeff Caggiano leads the ribbon cutting for The New Cambridge Project after the brewery bar officially opened replacing Firefly Hollow Brewery.

New Cambridge Project opens downtown

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — The New Cambridge Project has officially opened in the former Firefly Hollow Brewery building with owners promising there will be "something for everyone" to enjoy.

The New Cambridge Project, which is named after the city's former name, is run by Spencer Shankle, Daniel Parisi, James Ferro III and Victoria Pena. They employ a team of three at

the new brewery at 139 Center St., including their head brewer Lou Vega.

The New Cambridge Project had its soft opening in March. The new owners acquired the rights to Firefly Hollow's brews after it closed last year. They also offer their own brews and will have a rotating list of three or four other brands, offering a wide variety of styles.

"We have everything from your classic American and Mexican lagers to IPAs, both lighter

and heavier beers," he said.

This past weekend, The New Cambridge Project had live music and food trucks in celebration of their grand opening. Going forward, owners plan to host trivia nights every Tuesday starting at 6:30 p.m., as well as cornhole leagues and other activities.

Shankle encouraged the community to come down and give the new brewery a try.

"Experience something new but familiar," he said.

"We take great pride in what we do and we're looking forward to being a place that people can come together, relax and have a good time."

In addition to drinks, the New Cambridge Project is also selling hot dogs and perogies. They aim to open a full kitchen by the end of the fall.

"We'll have pizzas, flatbreads and other classic, shareable pub food," said Shankle.

The New Cambridge Project has ample indoor

and outdoor seating. Shankle said they will also build a private event space, which they hope to have open by mid-summer.

Ferro III is from Bristol and the other owners live in nearby towns, Shankle said. They all met as employees of the Twelve Percent Beer Project in North Haven. They then decided to open their own location. Mayor Jeff Caggiano and the city's economic development team were "very helpful"

See NEW ON PAGE 4

Mayor, veterans thankful for cannon restoration

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP



Neal Supranovich

The refurbished cannon on Memorial Boulevard - American Legion Post 209

Memorial Boulevard.

Neal Supranovich, historian with American Legion Post 2, said that certificates of appreciation were presented at the American Legion Post 2 meeting hall at 22 Hooker Court prior to the monthly meeting of the

Bristol Veterans Council. They were thanked for restoring the cannon to its "original glory."

Sarah Larson and Leonard Lamothe were thanked by the members of the Bristol Veterans Council. See CANNON ON PAGE 4



**One Liberty Square,
New Britain 06050**
The Bristol Press
(ISSN 0891-5563)
is published each morning
Monday through Friday and in
a weekend edition except
Christmas Day by Connecticut
News Media Inc.
Copyright 2022, Connecticut
News Media Inc.

CIRCULATION
For Circulation issues or
questions, call 7:30 am to
4 pm, Monday-Friday and
8 am to 10 am Saturdays.
860-423-8466 ext 1 or email
our circulation department at
delivery@thechronicle.com.
Closed Sundays.

We do not publish a print edition
on federal holidays. We publish
an e-edition in its place.

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POSTAL INFORMATION
The Bristol Press, pending
periodical #9173,
is published 6 days per week
excluding Sunday.
Periodicals postage paid
at Bristol, CT. Post office
address: P.O. Box 229
Willimantic, CT 06226.
Postmaster: Send address
changes to The Bristol Press,
P.O. Box 229
Willimantic, CT 06226.

RATES
Single copy:
Monday - Friday \$2.00
Saturdays \$2.50
SUBSCRIPTION:
One Year: \$375

LaPorte recalled as 'super-volunteer'

Continued from Page 1

more than 30 years and previously served on the Town Council. LaPorte also founded the Western Baseball Little League and started the town's soccer league and wrestling leagues. He was previously recognized with UNICO's Gold Medal of Honor and the Southington YMCA's Person of the Year.

"He was a spectacular person who gave the lion's share

of his life to his town," said DelSanto. "We felt that it was fitting to protect his legacy and put his name on the building which will be there at the drive-in in perpetuity."

DelSanto said that he considered LaPorte one of his personal and political mentors.

"One of my favorite things to do was talk to him about the history of Southington and our parks," he said. "He

was a lifelong friend of the family who I knew my entire life. He was a great family man with a love and a passion for Southington. There aren't many people like him left with so much devotion to public service and their family."

DelSanto said that LaPorte's son, Dan LaPorte, was invited to Monday's meeting and was surprised with the news about the pavilion.

He was originally told that he would be there to give an update on a program that he started to help people with disabilities.

"I was extremely surprised and emotional," said Dan LaPorte. "Our family is very grateful to the town for recognizing my father in this capacity."

Dan LaPorte said that he is thankful that the town had the "foresight" to purchase the

land for the drive-in. He said that it is a "great asset to the community." His father, he said, could not have built the pavilion without great support from many other community volunteers.

"We are very fortunate to live in a town like Southington which has such a great spirit of volunteerism," LaPorte said.

According to Joe LaPorte's obituary, he was a veteran who served with the U.S. Army.

Cannon restored by huge community effort

Continued from Page 1

Council for all their hard work in restoring the cannon," Supranovich said. "Chris Ziogas, who played a major part in the refurbishing, was unable to attend. Plans are in place to present his certificate at a later time."

Caggiano gave kudos to Ziogas, a former state representative; Lamothe, a former parks commissioner; and the Parks Department for their efforts. Ziogas funded the restoration through the Clinton S. Roberts Foundation, for which he is executive direc-

tor. Lamothe drove out to Pennsylvania to get the new wheels for the cannon.

"We are eternally grateful," said Caggiano. "Now this 100+ year old cannon will hopefully be able to last for another 100 years."

The cannon on Memorial Boulevard is a German Howitzer 105mm, which was built in 1906 and captured by U.S. forces during World War I. It was presented to the city of Bristol by the Harold F. Emmett Post on July 17, 1926.

Lamothe started discuss-

ing the cannon's restoration with the late former mayor and Bristol Veterans Council member Art Ward. Lamothe took care of the cannon as part of his duties as a parks employee. He recognized that it would need to be repaired.

"I would go down there and spin the wheels to make sure that they were still good," he said. "Eventually, they started to deteriorate."

Lamothe got in touch with A & A Canning and Wheel in New Holland, Pennsylvania, to do the restoration work for the wheels of the cannon. He

Cannon's inscription

The inscription on the cannon reads as follows:
"Dedicated to the Memory
Of Our Fallen Comrades
And Presented to the City of Bristol By
Harold F. Emmett Post No. 994
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Of The United States.
July 17, 1926."

then traveled to Amish country in Pennsylvania to see the project through. He began the process in April 2022 and got permission to go to Pennsylvania with another

park employee. They brought the cannon down in July 2022 and the cannon was returned in December of that same year. The restored wheels are made with white oak.

Plan for Plymouth downtown transformative

Continued from Page 1

Transformational Plan." "This grant will allow us to hire a consultant who can really look at our downtown and come up with a workable renovation

plan," Mayor Joe Kilduff said at the time. "It will help us to put together projects to give our downtown a facelift. This is a fantastic first step for the town."

This grant allowed the

town to hire East Hartford-based Goman+York to assist the Community Investment Ad Hoc Committee. Community surveys were conducted to seek the public's input leading up to the May 22 meeting.

According to the town website, key ele-

ments of the Downtown Transformational Plan and process include:

- Engaging the town, area stakeholders, and the community to create a revitalized and exciting place that enhances the quality of life while adding and creating value to the community
- Identifying oppor-

tunities for growth and development within the downtown area and throughout the community of Plymouth

- Developing actionable strategies that support purposeful steps to actively support the current businesses and attract future opportunities

New Cambridge bar now open

Continued from Page 1

in helping them open in Bristol, Shankle said. The New Cambridge Project has also become members of the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce. Katie D'Agostino, president and CEO of the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce, said she is excited to see the brewery spot open again.

"I love the new look and its great that people have another fun thing to do downtown," she said.

Caggiano said that many in Bristol have "long awaited" the brewery's re-opening. He said that The New Cambridge Project is a "novel concept" by a "very entrepreneurial" group of owners. He said that the city's economic development team worked hard to help them.

"This is the type of entertainment that people are looking for in Bristol," he said. "I just walked here from City Hall today and soon we're going to have

104 new apartments opening downtown. So, that should help their already considerable following."

Justin Malley, economic development director, said that the new owners are passionate about continuing Firefly Hollow's legacy while also creating their own. He said that the city supports them and wishes them luck.

For more information, visit thenewcambridgeproject.com or look up "New Cambridge Project" on Facebook.

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Hartford Courant

Sunday, May 12, 2024

History on tap at brewery in Bristol

New Cambridge Project inspired by focus on innovation

BY STEPHEN UNDERWOOD HARTFORD COURANT

Bristol's newest brewery, The New Cambridge Project, pays homage to the city's industrial past, with a focus on innovation in the state's expanding brewing industry.

The brewery, which opened its doors at 139 Main St. inside the former Firefly Hollow Brewing Co., is a throwback to the city's original name. Bristol was first settled as an agricultural village and was known as "New Cambridge" in the early part of the 1700s, named for its British counterpart. The city didn't get its more well-known name until being incorporated in 1785, according to the city's history.

The New Cambridge Project, with 11,000 square feet of indoor space, is inside the former New Departure factory building that made everything from ball bearings to bicycle brakes in the early part of the 20th century. Long before ESPN arrived, New Departure was once Bristol's largest employer, according to the city's history. New Departure, founded by Albert Rockwell in 1889, would in 1907 establish the Bristol Engineering Co. that is credited with producing the first-ever New York City Yellow Cab.

For New Cambridge Project co-owners Spencer Shankle, Dan Parisi, James Ferro III and Victoria Pena, Bristol's history of innovation is inspiration for the future. The group, who all have experience in the industry, met as co-workers at Twelve Percent Beer Project in North Haven, before joining together to start their own brewing company.

"There's so much history in Bristol and this building is so rich with the blocks of what Bristol is today," Shankle said. "New Departure kept this country moving for years and was leading innovation in many areas. We want to pay homage to that past."

Walking in the city's innovative footsteps, The New Cambridge Project is more than just your average brewery, but a "brewing incubator" that serves as a launching pad for start-up brewers, offering assistance with fine-tuning recipes and production scaling. It works by allowing local home-brewers to come and brew their recipes on a larger more industrial scale.

"You see the passion people put into their brews, whether people are brewing out of their basement or garage, home-brewing has really taken off. There's so much passion and creativity going on in the space," Shankle said. "We want the industry to feel fun and creative and bring that community back. We want to be that spot to allow home-brewers to really experience what it's like to do a full size production batch and learn about large scale brewing."

Unlike other incubators that are more picky on deciding which local brewers get to use their space, Shankle said that he wants to have as many local brewers as possible get spotlighted. Each month, The New Cambridge Project will rotate a new home brewer on tap. The brewing incubator has six different brewers lined up for the rest of the year.

"We want to celebrate them and create a community of small brewers in Bristol," Shankle said. "It's about helping them get started and learn more about the process."

The brewery has nine drink selections on tap including a hard seltzer named "Bristol Lite" and an oatmeal milk stout named "First Strike." Other varieties include classic lagers and ales including an American pale ale named "Taxi!" as a nod to the Yellow Cabs manufactured in Bristol over a century ago.

"Taxi is our most popular offering right now," co-owner Dan Parisi said. "That is just a super smooth, easy to drink, hoppy pale ale with citra and mosaic hops. It has enough of a bite to keep you coming back, but it's juicy enough that you want to drink it in like two sips."

For those looking for a more sweet offering, the oatmeal milk stout offers a creamy, darker brew. Milk stouts are dark beers brewed with lactose, a type of milk sugar, making them ideal for beer lovers with a sweet tooth.

"A lot of the beers were putting out right now are no frills, just fast balls right down the middle," Parisi said. "Our oatmeal milk stout has just the right amount of roast and sweetness to level it out. We actually get asked often if there's coffee in it, because of its roast like quality. And there is none. We personally feel like we put just enough lactose in it to make it an easy sipping but sweet beer."

The New Cambridge Project also offers both a West Coast India pale ale named “What’s West of Westeros” and an East Coast India pale ale named “Wildcat.” New England or East Coast IPAs are often labeled “hazy” emphasizing their hop aroma and flavor without bitterness.

“Our West Coast India pale ale is not going to be hazy at all, it’s actually going to be clear,” Shankle said. “And you’re going to be getting a lot more bitter and pine notes, while also getting a lot more citrus. It’s going to be much more bitter than your typical hazy New England IPA. So far it’s been a big hit as people have come and tried it.”

Shankle, who is from California, said he wanted to include the unique offering, which is not found on most East Coast beer menus, as part of the brewery’s standard lineup.

The New Cambridge Project currently offers simple food options like hot dogs and pirogies, but has plans to expand its offerings. The brewery has seating for around 50 inside and for 40 outside on its patio. The brewery also has a dedicated overflow area off the patio with an additional 30 seats that is used for trivia and events.

“We’re looking to expand that menu and are hoping to be breaking ground on a full size kitchen very soon. The hope is it will be completed by the end of the year,” Parisi said. “In the meantime, this summer we’re looking to have some revolving food trucks on the property.”

Hartford Business Journal

May 10, 2024

Slingshot gallery seeks permit for Bristol location



WWW.FORKPLUSBANDSLINGSHOT.COM

Fork + Band Slingshot is seeking a special permit to open in Bristol.

By David Krechevsky

“This is not the Bart Simpson version of slingshot.”

That’s the disclaimer offered by Andrew “Andy” Cislo, Ph.D., who is seeking a permit to operate an indoor slingshot shooting gallery in downtown Bristol.

Cislo is the owner of Fork + Band Slingshot, which includes not only a shooting gallery but also a retail shop selling slingshots and accessories. He has applied to the Bristol Zoning Commission seeking a special permit to open and operate the shop in vacant space he hopes to lease at 99 Main St. The application is scheduled to be received and accepted Monday

evening and scheduled for a future public hearing.

The location includes about 3,200 square feet of space adjacent to Biker's Edge Cycle Store, and includes 16 parking spaces.

ADVERTISEMENT

A New Jersey native, Cislo opened a "pop-up" shooting gallery at the mall in Meriden last November, but it closed in February. He is seeking a permanent space and told the Hartford Business Journal on Friday that his search led him to Bristol.

"We just liked Bristol because it seems, in speaking with people representing the city, that there's a little bit of excitement in the air," he said. "We hope to become a destination."

F+B offers slingshot target shooting games and sports. Cislo said the shooting gallery is appropriate "for ages 5 to 95" and designed for safe and rewarding play — and not as a place to take out pent up aggression.

"We're the new face of slingshot," Cislo said. "We're simply doing it our way. What you don't find is aggression. There are no targets that represent people, animals, buildings, cars or anything like that. This is the 'out-with-family' version, or the 'trying-to-impress-your-date' version."

He admits the focus reflects his Ph.D. in sociology, which he earned at Florida State University. He worked as a researcher in the area of "quantitative mental health on a population level," he said.

ADVERTISEMENT

He was already a fan of slingshot, which he said is a popular recreational activity and competitive sport outside of the United States, when he suffered a "major health setback." He more fully developed his fandom into a hobby that included learning to build slingshots and related equipment.

"I took a look at what I was doing and decided that I think I'd be happier with a different course in life," which led to the decision to open the shooting gallery, he said.

The proposal for the Bristol location would accommodate 16 players per session. Participants register in advance online, with sessions typically beginning on the hour. Parents or guardians may observe without participating.

According to the application, guests must sign waivers for play and are required to wear safety glasses. Each player receives instruction on using the slingshots, which are fitted with lightweight latex bands that use rubber training ammo. Setups are customized for each player.

The location will also feature a retail store carrying slingshot frames and accessories, though

no slingshots will be sold to minors.

The gallery will not include a food or beverage service, but will sell a selection of packaged snacks and non-alcoholic beverages, Cislo said.

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According to the application, regular hours would be Thursdays and Fridays 4-10 p.m., Saturdays noon to 10 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.. It adds that operating hours may be added to accommodate private or special events, most often during school breaks, More information is available on its website.

Cislo added that he has in the past worked with the criminal justice system and hopes to expand his business at some point to include programs for at-risk youth.

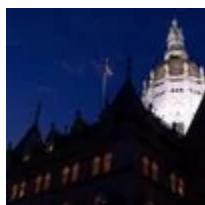
“I would like to grow the business to be of some public service that would bury those interests of mine in mental health,” he said. “Particularly for young at-risk people, and then build programs to have a safe place for people who are facing troubles to go.”

The Bristol Zoning Commission meeting on Monday is scheduled for 6 p.m. in the council chambers in City Hall.

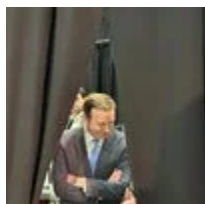


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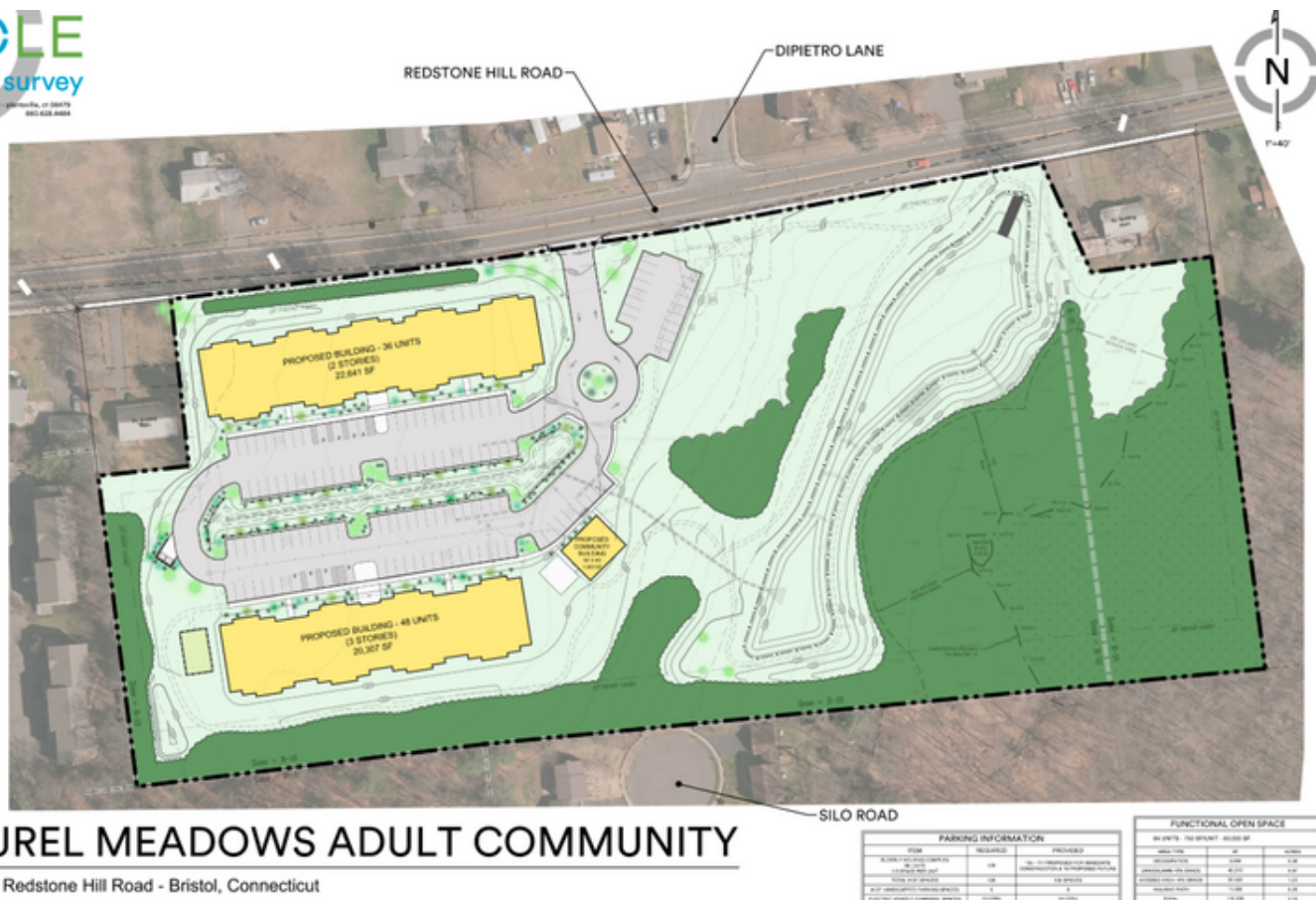
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Hartford Business Journal

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Third time the charm for controversial Bristol senior housing project



CONTRIBUTED

The Laurel Meadows senior housing community in Bristol will have 84 units.

By David Krechevsky

The Bristol Zoning Commission building on Monday approved an 84-unit senior housing project over the objections of neighbors to the property.

The proposal was the third attempt by Joseph Naples, a Bristol resident who owns Plainville-based Laurel Meadows LLC, to develop more than 11 acres on Redstone Hill Road.

After completing a public hearing that began April 8 and featured a majority of residents speaking against the project as out of character for the neighborhood, the commission approved a special permit and a site plan on identical 3-2 votes.

Naples plans to build 84 residential senior housing units on a site that consists of six parcels and three single-family homes. Two of the homes will be retained and separated into independent lots at the northeast and northwest corners of the property, while the third home in the center of the parcel will be removed.

The remaining properties will be combined into a single lot totaling 11.23 acres. On that lot, Laurel Meadows will erect a one-story community building and two apartment buildings — a two-story building with 36 units and a three-story building with 48 units.

Of the 84 units, 65 will be two-bedroom apartments and 19 will be one-bedroom.

The parcels involved are identified as 560, 594 and 644 Redstone Hill Road, and lots 9B-1, 9B-2, 11, 11-2, 11-3 and 10-B-1 on assessor's map 1.

Naples' two previous applications met with stiff opposition. In 2020, his initial proposal seeking a zone change for a major multifamily luxury housing development aroused strong opposition from residents of the surrounding neighborhood.

In 2022, Naples won approval from the Zoning Commission for a special permit and site plan for 86 senior housing units, but that project was thwarted when the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency rejected it in a 4-3 vote. That rejection is the subject of a lawsuit in New Britain Superior Court.

The new application circumvented that issue by reconfiguring the project so it did not require wetlands approval. The revised plan also reduced the size of the project.

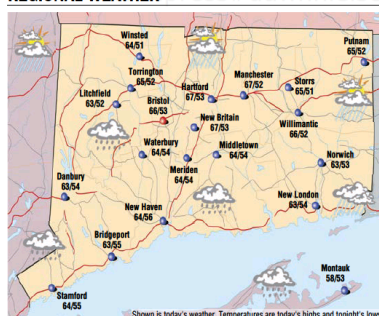
FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR BRISTOL

TODAY	TONIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
					
HIGH 66	LOW 53	72	68	66	68
Few Showers	Few Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Few Showers	Mostly Cloudy

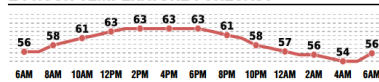
ALMANAC

Temperature	
Bristol Tuesday	
High	78
Low	53
Normal high	70
Normal low	48
Last year high	72
Last year low	46
Precipitation	
Yesterday	0.00"
Month to date	1.14"
Normal month to date	1.50"
Year to date	21.82"
Normal year to date	14.80"

REGIONAL WEATHER



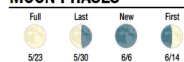
24-HOUR TEMPERATURE FORECAST



SUN AND MOON

	Rise	Set
Sun today	5:30 a.m.	8:06 p.m.
Sun Friday	5:29 a.m.	8:07 p.m.
Moon today	1:24 p.m.	2:31 a.m.
Moon Friday	2:29 p.m.	2:50 a.m.

MOON PHASES



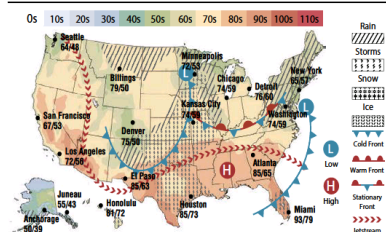
CONDITIONS TODAY

UV Index for Today	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8 a.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 a.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 p.m.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TIDES

Saybrook Point	Today	Wednesday
High	6:10 a.m. 3.0 ft.	7:06 a.m. 2.9 ft.
Low	12:18 p.m. 0.8 ft.	12:55 a.m. 1.0 ft.
High	6:36 p.m. 3.2 ft.	7:29 p.m. 3.4 ft.
Low	NONE NA 1.03 p.m. 0.8 ft.	
New Haven	Today	Wednesday
High	6:33 a.m. 5.5 ft.	7:29 a.m. 5.5 ft.
Low	12:24 a.m. 1.2 ft.	1:21 a.m. 1.1 ft.
High	7:03 p.m. 5.8 ft.	7:53 p.m. 6.1 ft.
Low	12:50 p.m. 1.1 ft.	1:40 p.m. 1.1 ft.

NATIONAL WEATHER



NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Friday
Albuquerque	68 49 t 85 56 s	
Anchorage	50 39 mc 51 40 ra	
Atlanta	85 65 s 81 67 sh	
Boston	64 52 sh 63 51 mc	
Charlotte	81 63 pc 82 66 sh	
Chicago	74 59 sh 66 57 sh	
Cincinnati	80 61 mc 76 62 sh	
Cleveland	69 60 mc 77 62 sh	
Dallas	80 67 sh 84 66 t	
Denver	75 50 s 83 53 s	
Detroit	76 60 pc 75 61 sh	
Honolulu	81 72 t 83 73 sh	
Houston	85 73 sh 86 69 t	
Indianapolis	78 63 mc 75 62 sh	
Kansas City	74 59 sh 76 60 t	
Las Vegas	96 71 s 99 73 s	
Los Angeles	72 56 pc 73 57 pc	
Miami	83 80 sh 90 83 pc	
Minneapolis	72 53 sh 81 61 s	
Nashville	85 65 pc 77 63 sh	
New Orleans	87 74 pc 88 73 t	
Orlando	92 70 s 94 75 pc	
Philadelphia	65 57 ra 74 58 mc	
Phoenix	95 72 s 99 74 s	
Portland, ME	64 52 sh 62 50 mc	
St. Louis	74 63 sh 73 62 sh	
Salt Lake City	78 57 s 81 50 s	
San Diego	67 59 mc 69 58 mc	
San Francisco	67 53 pc 68 54 pc	
Seattle	64 48 ra 65 49 pc	
Washington, DC	74 59 mc 77 60 mc	

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Friday
Amherst, MA	69 52 sh 74 53 mc	
Catkill, NY	69 53 sh 76 55 mc	
Hanover	63 55 ra 73 53 mc	
Hyannis, MA	62 50 sh 58 48 mc	
Newport, RI	63 52 sh 64 50 mc	
New York City	65 57 ra 72 56 mc	
Pittsfield, MA	67 51 sh 73 52 mc	
Providence, RI	64 52 sh 67 50 mc	
Poughkeepsie, NY	66 53 sh 76 54 mc	
Southbury	64 54 ra 75 53 mc	
Springfield, MA	66 53 sh 74 54 mc	
Wallington	63 54 ra 75 53 mc	
Warwick, RI	62 52 sh 66 50 mc	
West Point, NY	65 55 ra 76 56 mc	

WORLD CITIES

City	Today	Friday
Beijing	92 63 pc 96 67 s	
Cairo	94 68 s 98 72 s	
Hong Kong	78 76 cl 77 74 ra	
London	61 54 ra 68 52 ra	
Mexico City	89 69 s 90 70 pc	
Moscow	65 47 mc 64 53 ra	
Paris	61 54 ra 68 52 ra	
Rio de Janeiro	80 70 ra 91 73 s	
Rome	79 60 pc 75 59 s	
Sydney	66 56 mc 70 69 cl	
Tokyo	74 63 ra 76 62 s	
Toronto	68 54 s 69 54 cl	

Weather (Wx): S=sunny, P=partly cloudy, MC=mostly cloudy, D=cloudy, F=fair, R=rain & snow, SH=showers, SS=snow, SN=snow showers, S-H=ice, S-H=ice/snow.



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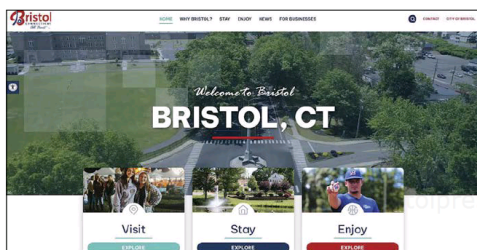
City of Bristol's website has added some functionalities

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — The Bristol All Heart website, bristolallheart.com, has been updated to be more responsive and easier to navigate on all devices.

"The new design is user-friendly for all, so that the community can visit it on a regular basis to keep up to date on all that is happening in the All Heart City," said Dawn Nielsen, city marketing and public relations specialist. "The City welcomes user feedback and invites the community to use it to promote local organizations or companies, to post job openings and events and more."

(a)squaredstudio Web Design & Graphic Design



The City of Bristol's new website homepage has some new functionalities.

of Middletown was hired to redesign the website, according to Nielsen.

Nielsen said new features have been added to make bristolallheart.com convenient to submit events, a business or organization listing, job opportunities, or to sign up to receive news from the City of Bristol. The free event online submission form allows any community organization to post events to the Bristol All Heart website. To access the online submission form, visit the Home Page, then

click on the ENJOY tab at the top of the page to find the "Submit an Event" form under EVENTS.

Another new feature allows all Bristol businesses and organizations to post job openings on the site.

"This is a free service for all businesses and organizations to use to help promote job opportunities within the Bristol community," said Nielsen.

To view job listings and to access the online submission form, click on the FOR BUSINESSES tab at the top

of the page, scroll down and click the EXPLORE button under Job Opportunities. All job postings will be posted for a period of 60 days or until the city is notified by email that the position has been filled.

Nielsen said that the newly updated Bristol All Heart website was designed with the community in mind. "It allows community organizations and businesses to be added to the Community & Business Directory by filling out a simple online submission form," she said. "The directory is organized by neighborhood and type of services provided to make it easy to locate all organizations and businesses in Bristol quickly and easily."

Click the ENJOY tab on the Home Page then the "Community & Business" link under THINGS TO DO to view the directory and access the online submission form.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Thursday, May 16, the 137th day of 2024. There are 229 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 16, 1943, the nearly month-long Warsaw Ghetto Uprising came to an end as German forces crushed the Jewish resistance and blew up the Great Synagogue.

On this date:

In 1770, Marie Antoinette, age 14, married the future King Louis XVI of France, who was 15.

In 1866, Congress authorized minting of the first five-cent piece, also known as the "Shield nickel."

In 1929, the first Academy Awards were presented. "Wings" won "best production," while Emil Jannings (YAHN-ing-s) and Janet Gaynor were named best actor and best actress.

In 1939, the federal government began its first food stamp program in Rochester, New York.

In 1957, federal agent Eliot Ness, who organized "The Untouchables" team that took on gangster Al Capone, died in Coudersport, Pennsylvania, at age 54.

In 1960, the first working laser was demonstrated at Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu, California, by physicist Theodore Maiman.

In 1966, China launched the Cultural Revolution, a radical as well as deadly reform movement aimed at purging the country of "counter-revolutionaries."

In 1975, Japanese climber Junko Tabei became the first woman to reach the

summit of Mount Everest.

In 1990, death claimed entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. in Los Angeles at age 64 and "Muppets" creator Jim Henson in New York at age 53.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton publicly apologized for the notorious Tuskegee experiment, in which government scientists deliberately allowed Black men to weaken and die of treatable syphilis.

In 2007, anti-war Democrats in the Senate failed in an attempt to cut off funds for the Iraq war.

In 2012, Bosnian Serb Gen. Ratko Mladic went on trial at the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands, accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. (Mladic would be convicted on 10 counts and sentenced to life in prison.)

In 2013, "The Office" aired its final episode after nine seasons on the air on NBC.

In 2016, President Barack Obama called on the nation to support law enforcement officers as he bestowed the Medal of Valor on 13 who risked their lives.

In 2018, officials at Michigan State University said they had agreed to pay \$500 million to settle the claims from more than 300 women and girls who said they were assaulted by sports doctor Larry Nassar.

In 2022, the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 hit 1 million.

Today's Birthdays:

Former Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats is 81. Jazz musician Billy Cobham is 80.

Actor Danny Trejo is 80.

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Dawn Nielsen
Mayor Jeff Caggiano (second from left) listens to Stephen Larson, partner in W/L Properties, owner of the Larson Farms building that once housed Esporta (L.A.) Fitness.

New fitness center at Larson Farms

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — City leaders Tuesday welcomed GF Fitness (Georgia Fitness), which opened in the former Esporta (L.A.) Fitness location at the Shoppes at Larson Farms.

The Shoppes at Larson Farms owners, Stephen and Ralph Larson, and Stephen Wasley announced at a press conference the arrival of a new and expanded fitness center to the former Esporta facility at 1379 Farmington Ave.

This will be GF Fitness' first franchise location, and the first in Connecticut, with plans for expansion in the state and other states.

"GF Fitness is excited to upgrade this space," said Dan Bingham, general manager for the Bristol GF Fitness facility. "We invite former Esporta members

See ESPORTA ON PAGE 4

Veterans monument to be dedicated

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — The now-completed POW/MIA monument on Memorial Boulevard will be dedicated this Memorial Day, the Bristol Veterans Council announced.

The dedication will take place around noon on May 27, following the Memorial Day Parade and the Memorial Day Ceremony.

The monument has a POW/MIA empty chair

with memorial bricks around it. There are granite pillars surrounding it, representing each of the branches of the military. A chain connects them, which represents the unity of the branches in having POW/MIA soldiers brought home and accounted for. There is also a nearby bench and a POW/MIA flag is being installed Thursday to fly along with the American flag at the monument site.

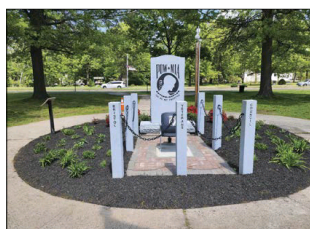
The project was spearheaded by the Bristol

Veterans Council. Brian Avery, commander of American Legion Post 209 and vice chair of the Bristol Veterans Council, said that the monument was planned since last October.

He said that it has been an long but rewarding journey to see it go from a sketch on a piece of paper to a reality.

"We're all very happy and proud that Bristol has this monument," he said. "None of the other towns

have a monument like this. See POW/MIA ON PAGE 4



Brian Avery
The front and back of the monument along with the bench.

Seventy-five years



The splash pad at YMCA Camp Sloper wets a bunch of park-goers during a past summer season in Southington.

Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA

YMCA Camp Sloper ready to celebrate

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANJOHNSONBP

SOUTHTON — YMCA Camp Sloper is holding two events to celebrate their 75th year of operating in town this summer.

The first one is Alumni Camp Tours on Friday, July 19 from noon to 3 p.m. at the camp at 1000 East St. Sloper alumni, past campers, staff, volunteers and donors who have been connected to YMCA Camp Sloper are welcome to join the tour. There will also be a special presentation at the Amphitheater

from 1 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Following the tour there will be an alumni celebration at the Sloper House for attendees 21 and older.

The second event is the 75th Anniversary Celebration Picnic, which will be held on Saturday, July 20 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.. This is open to all Sloper families, alumni and anyone connected to Sloper through the years. There will be activities including the new splash park, Sloper Express, climbing tower, superslide, boating, swimming and more.

To register for the alumni

tour, email Justin Hubeny at jhubeny@scycymca.org or call the YMCA Camp Sloper office at 860-621-8194.

To RSVP for the Celebration Picnic, call the camp office at 860-621-8194 or email Tom Sangeloty at tsangeloty@scycymca.org.

In 1949, upon her passing, Cornelia Sloper Neal willed her 142.5 acres farm to the Southington Community YMCA. She gave it in memory of her parents Augusta E. Sloper and Dave Root Sloper, her brother Ambrose Sloper and two sisters, Mary and

Julia. Cornelia Sloper Neal's last will and testament states:

"I give and devise my farm located on East Street in Southington, containing one hundred and fifty acres, to the Southington Young Men's Christian Association Inc. It is my will that said farm with the pond of water thereon shall be developed for and used as a camp site for water sports, and promoting similar outdoor health and recreation for the largest number possible of young men and women."

Seventy-five years later, YMCA Camp Sloper has

developed into a year-round outdoor center, with programs that run all year including outdoor education, teambuilding, rentals, birthday parties, family events, school trips, weddings, and much more. Day Camp is the flagship program that happens every summer. The first year of day camp had 50 campers for the entire summer and the YMCA is now serving 4,500 campers a summer.

Justin Hubeny, YMCA Camp Sloper Outdoor Center director, who is celebrating his 20th year working at YMCA Camp

See CAMP ON PAGE 4

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The Bristol Press
Serving the Community of Bristol, Connecticut
One Liberty Square
New Britain 06050
The Bristol Press
(ISSN 0891-5563)
is published each morning
Monday through Saturday
except on federal holidays by
Connecticut News Media Inc.
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News Media Inc.

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For Circulation issues or
questions, call 7:30 am to
4 pm, Monday-Friday and
8 am to 10 am Saturdays.
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Periodicals postage paid
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Postmaster: Send address
changes to The Bristol Press,
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Camp Sloper plans several events to celebrate its 75th anniversary

Continued from Page 1

Sloper, said the Y is proud to serve so many campers and families each year.

"I am personally proud to be part of YMCA Camp Sloper and helping make a positive impact in our community, in our kids, and in our families," Hubeny said. "YMCA Camp Sloper has been developed by the vision and dedication of many over the years. So many people made such a positive impact on YMCA Camp Sloper over the past 75 years. We are extremely grateful and thankful for all of them and their contributions."

Mark Pooler, CEO of the Southington-Cheshire Community YMCA, said that YMCA Camp Sloper is "one of the gems that makes Southington so special."

"We are so fortunate that Cornelia Sloper Neal had the foresight and generosity to gift this property to the YMCA in 1949," he said. "That sort of generosity is

legendary and I know she would be proud of the work we are doing out here each year and the positive impact that we are having on the lives of so many youth, teens and families."

Pooler said that YMCA Camp Sloper has a unique history prior to being an outdoor center and day camp.

"The property started as a farm, harvested ice on the pond, had a working creamery at one time and is the location where under-water hardening cement was invented," Pooler said.

When the property was turned over to the YMCA, there were not many funds in the early years for upkeep, maintenance and improvements.

"For many decades it was a seasonal facility and only used in the warmer months," said Pooler. "While day camp has always been the most notable program the YMCA has run, YMCA Camp Sloper has hosted



A historical photo of diving at YMCA Camp Sloper in the 1960s.

many unique events through the years." Those have included outings for scouting groups, church or family picnics, sporting events, family swim clubs, a circus, many carnivals and festivals and triathlons.

Pooler spent 25 years leading the camp as the Outdoor Center director and camp director before moving downtown and eventually becoming the

CEO. He credits two key things to the success of YMCA Camp Sloper. "We have had a great plan and great people, that has been the key to our success," said Pooler. "The plan is our Master Plan for the facility which has really been our road map for annual improvements. But it is the people who have brought that plan to life,

volunteers, staff, donors, campers, members, contractors and many more. We have been blessed to have amazing people share their time, talents and treasure with us for the betterment of the programs and facilities here."

For questions, call the YMCA Camp Sloper Outdoor Center at 860-621-8194 or visit ymcampsloper.org.

POW/MIA monument meets critical deadline

Continued from Page 1

This will be something that people come to Bristol to visit because of what this monument means. It's something that we should all be proud of."

Avery thanked several workers from the city Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department for their efforts to install the monument. He thanked Ron Dionne for doing the electrical and brick work, Steven Schriver, who did the landscape design and installation, and JR Galindo and Tommy

Connelly, who removed the old monument plantings with Schriver. He also thanked Ryan Dion and Steve Alvarez, who did the cement work and forms for the monument podium.

"The Parks Department did 99% of this in-house and worked side by side with the Veterans Council to establish one of the nicest monuments in Connecticut," said Avery. Additionally, Avery thanked Stephanie England of England Family Monument Co., whom he said did a "wonderful job"

with preparing, ordering and installing the monument. He also thanked Ahlgren Landscaping Co. for putting the pillars in the ground.

Avery said that the end result is more than he ever expected.

"I've been on Memorial Boulevard the last couple of days and spoke to people who told me that their breath was taken away when they saw the monument," he said. "Tears were shed. We want people to come, sit on the bench, look at the monument, reflect and enjoy

the park."

The Bristol Veterans Council is still selling commemorative shirts, hoodies and hats for two for \$50. Proceeds will go toward a contingency fund which will be used in the event that the monument needs any repairs. The items are available for purchase at Primo Press, City True Value Hardware or Family Roots Produce Market. They can also be purchased from Primo Press' website, primo-pressct.com.

Additionally, there will be a fundraiser Sunday,

May 19 at Dumphy's Ice Cream at 912 Stafford Ave. from 1:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. A portion of the proceeds from ice cream purchased during this time Sunday will go toward supporting the monument fund.

People can also make donations by sending checks to Bristol Veterans Council Inc., P.O.W. - M.I.A. Fundraiser c/o Stanley J. Piotrowski - Treasurer, P.O. Box 2634 Bristol, CT, 06111-2634. For questions, call Primo Press at 860-261-4013 and ask for Andrew.

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Esporta site now GF Fitness

Continued from Page 1

and the entire Bristol community to come and have a look at the improvements once we complete the facelift and before we officially open at the beginning of June."

GF Fitness plans to make several improvements to the 45,000-square-foot space, including replacing the basketball court with three pickleball courts, and converting the pool to saltwater for a healthier and more enjoyable swimming experience.

The facility will get a facelift with new paint and new equipment that is spread out for a cleaner appearance and more personalized experience.

"We are very appreciative of the tremendous cooperation we've experienced in teaming up with owner Mark Montgomery and his team at GF Fitness," said Stephen Larson, partner in W/L Properties.

To learn more about the new GF Fitness center in Bristol, visit tinyurl.com/4yxc38st.

"We are very appreciative of the tremendous cooperation we've experienced in teaming up with owner Mark Montgomery and his team at GF Fitness."

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Hartford Courant

CONNECTICUT

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Millions earmarked for opioid fight

State will spend \$8M in settlement funds to save drug users and keep them out of jail

By Andrew Brown
CT Mirror

Connecticut's Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee voted on Tuesday to spend more than \$8 million to expand the distribution of harm reduction supplies in the state and to boost existing programs that are focused on helping people who are tied up in the criminal justice system.

The committee members, which are responsible for allocating the state's share of several national legal settlements, hope that money will help to reduce the number of overdose deaths in Connecticut tied to heroin, fentanyl and prescription painkillers.

Roughly \$2.3 million of the newly approved funding will be used to purchase more than 60,000 doses of naloxone, the overdose reversing drug, which is commonly sold under the brand name Narcan.

Another \$1.5 million will spent over the next three years to help to purchase clean syringes and other harm reduction supplies, which can help save the lives of active drug users and prevent the spread of blood-borne diseases like hepatitis and HIV.

More than \$416,000 will go towards expanding and upgrading medication-assisted treatment sites in several Connecticut prisons, including the Brooklyn, Cheshire, MacDougal and Walker correctional facilities.

And the remaining \$3.8 million will be used over three years to extend an existing pre-trial diversion program, which allows individuals who have been charged with non-violent crimes to receive probation and drug treatment instead of going to jail.

The \$8 million that was allocated on Tuesday is only a portion of the more than \$124 million that the committee has received to this point from the negotiated settlements with several nationwide opioid manufacturers, shippers and retailers.

In total, Connecticut is expected to receive roughly \$600 million from the national legal settlements over the next decade and

beyond, with a portion of that going to towns and cities in the state.

The advisory committee, which was created by state lawmakers in 2022 to help safeguard the state's portion of the settlement funds, has been meeting since March 2023. But to this point, the committee has been extremely cautious when it comes to spending the settlement proceeds.

Any proposal for how the money should be used has to go through a multi-step process before it can be approved by the full advisory committee. And even then, the committee has shown reluctance to dole out

Turn to Opioids, Page 2

Man faces charges in deadly overdose

Allegedly sold fatal level of fentanyl disguised as painkiller to 24-year-old

By Taylor Hartz
Hartford Courant

A Putnam man has been charged with allegedly selling fentanyl disguised as a less-potent prescription painkiller to a woman who fatally overdosed nearly four years ago.

Rohan "G" Robinson, 38, was arrested Wednesday and charged with second-degree manslaughter and illegal sale of a controlled substance in connection with the death of a woman in Stafford in 2021, according to Connecticut State Police.

The 24-year-old woman, who was not named in police records, was found unresponsive on a couch in her friend's house on Sept. 22, 2021, following a night of drinking at Charlee Bravos in Putnam.

After leaving the bar, the woman and a friend reportedly met up with an alleged drug dealer named "G" to buy what they thought were Percocet pills, according to the arrest warrant affidavit for Robinson.

State police allege that Robinson sold pills marked as prescription Percocets, which were actually a mix of fentanyl and Tramadol, to the two women early in the morning after arranging a deal via texts and calls to a burner phone, the warrant affidavit said.

According to the warrant affidavit, the victim's friend — whose name was also redacted from records — told investigators that the two snorted one of the four pills they purchased from "G" after leaving the bar. She and other witnesses told state police they did not know the man's real name.

Turn to Overdose, Page 2

Man allegedly seen drinking on social media before crash

Police say driver was going wrong way, leaving 1 dead

By Taylor Hartz
Hartford Courant

A Milford man is facing manslaughter charges in connection with a fatal wrong-way crash in Danbury last fall after investigators allegedly found social media posts of him drinking at multiple bars shortly before the crash.

Charles Connors, 34, was arrested on Tuesday and charged with second-degree manslaughter, reckless endangerment, driving the wrong way on a divided highway, operating under the influence and speeding, according to the Connecticut State Police.

The charges stem from a head-on crash that left a 25-year-old Danbury woman dead in September 2023.

At 1:53 a.m. on Sept. 10, 2023, troopers responded to reports of a head-on crash just north of an on-ramp near Exit 7 on Route 7 South in Danbury. State police found a gray Honda Accord and a black Dodge Challenger that had collided in the left lane, state police said in the warrant affidavit.

The Honda driver, identified as Danielle Dempsey of Danbury, was found unresponsive in her vehicle and taken to Danbury Hospital, where she was pronounced dead less than an hour later, state police said.

Turn to Crash, Page 2



Mark Montgomery, left, of GF Fitness talks Tuesday with Bristol Mayor Jeff Caggiano about his company's reuse of the former LA Fitness center on Farmington Avenue. **DON STACOM PHOTOS/HARTFORD COURANT**

New gym in Bristol aims to edge out competition

Fitness chain will offer pickleball, racquetball courts and saltwater lap pool

By Don Stacom | Hartford Courant

A chain of fitness centers in Georgia is making its debut in Connecticut this spring by taking over the recently closed Esporta gym in Bristol, which will reopen as GF Fitness next month.

The roughly 45,000-square-foot gym will feature pickleball courts, a saltwater lap pool, a small day care operation and more, the operators said Tuesday in announcing the plan.

GF Fitness said its Bristol location will employ about 40 people when it's fully staffed, and will be open daily from 4 a.m. to midnight at least — and possibly 24/7 if demand is strong enough.

Owner Mark Montgomery said he's confident the GF Fitness concept will be a hit in the Greater Bristol market, despite all of the competition.

Turn to Gym, Page 2



The empty pool at the former LA Fitness will reopen as a saltwater pool when GA Fitness takes over the building.

Porter a no-show at nominating convention

New Democratic candidate chosen for state House seat

By Mark Pazniokas
CT Mirror

A Connecticut state lawmaker who had neither filed papers creating a reelection committee, nor announced an intention to retire, was a no-show this week at her district nominating convention.

Rep. Robyn Porter, D-New Haven, was not present as Democrats in the 94th House District of New Haven and Hamden endorsed Steve Winter, a former city alder and longtime political activist, for the Democratic nomination without opposition.

The assumption is Porter is retiring, though not giving notice.

Aware that she had yet to file for reelection, House Majority Leader Jason Rojas,

D-East Hartford, said he tried without success to reach Porter prior to the convention to inquire about her plans.

She did not return calls or texts to Rojas, House Speaker Matt Ritter or others, nor she did return calls or a text from The Connecticut Mirror.

Winter, 35, who lives in the same Newhallville neighborhood as Porter, said he expressed interest in running if Porter was retiring, but he arrived at the convention unsure if he would be a candidate or observer.

"I did not know what the outcome of the convention would be, or who would be there," said Winter, who is the executive director of Climate and Sustainability for the city of New Haven.

Winter offered only praise for Porter, a House member for 10 years.

"I would just say I have immense respect for Rep. Porter for all the great advocacy she has led and been a part of in Hartford, not

just for the city of New Haven, but for so many issues that affected the whole state," Winter said.

Porter increasingly had been at odds, or at least distant, from leaders and members of the House Democratic caucus in recent years. She gave up her position as co-chair of the Labor and Public Employees Committee before the current two-year term.

On the labor committee, she was an advocate for a higher minimum wage and other pro-labor measures. She was a featured speaker when Gov. Ned Lamont signed into law a \$15 minimum wage law that Porter had shepherded to passage in 2019.

"What a day, what a moment," said Porter, who spoke passionately at the time about single mothers cobbling together minimum-wage jobs to run a household. "I have been that mom, that single mom, raising two kids with three jobs."

Turn to Porter, Page 2

CONNECTICUT

Crash

from Page 1

Connors, who was driving the Dodge, was also found unconscious and entrapped in his vehicle. He was extricated and taken to the same hospital with serious injuries, state police said.

Connors was first interviewed by troopers in a Danbury hospital room the night of the crash and allegedly showed signs of intoxication. According to a warrant affidavit for his arrest, Connors allegedly told a state trooper “I don’t drink or drive or anything like that,” before being asked about his alcohol intake.

“Trust me I’m a sober type of person,” he allegedly told the trooper. Toxicology reports later showed that Connors’ blood alcohol content that night was well beyond the state limit, at .197, the warrant affidavit said.

A sobriety test was not performed at the hospital due to Connors’ injuries, but a trooper allegedly smelled alcohol on his breath and noticed that his speech was slurred and delayed, according to the warrant affidavit.

A person who was not named in the warrant affidavit showed police several Instagram stories from an account with the username “chuckconnors203,” later reportedly linked to Connors. The account allegedly had videos and photos posted hours before the crash.

There were allegedly five posts showing Connors “at multiple bars, with what appeared to be alcoholic beverages,” according to the warrant affidavit.

In the last video posted, a person who appeared to be Connors was talking about “taking shots,” the warrant affidavit said.

A trooper investigating the crash went to a Norwalk bar that police believed Connors was at before the crash, where staff agreed to show police receipts from Connors’ purchases that night, which reportedly included several tequila shots and two margaritas, according to the warrant affidavit.

Investigators also met with an eyewitness who alleged that they were driving on Route 7 the night of the crash just before the Sugar Hollow Road exit when they saw the Dodge driving in the wrong direction, the warrant affidavit said.

The witness was able to swerve to avoid being struck by Connors, driving into the guard-rail. The driver made a U-turn to see where the wrong-way driver went and found the two cars smoking after colliding, according to the warrant affidavit.

An arrest warrant for Connors was granted on May 7. He was taken into custody by the Milford Police Department and transported to Troop A Southbury on Tuesday, state police said.

Connors was being held in lieu of a \$300,000 bond and was scheduled to be arraigned in Danbury Superior Court on Wednesday.

Opioids

from Page 1

the money too quickly.

In two earlier meetings, the advisory committee voted to approve \$500,000 to buy harm reduction supplies and \$4 million to pay for two new mobile methadone vans, which will be capable of dispensing that addiction treatment medication in more remote corners of the state.

But in both those cases, the committee members cut the initial funding recommendations in half.

That’s the primary reason the committee was asked to approve an additional \$1.5 million for clean syringes and other harm reduction supplies on Tuesday.

Chris McClure, the chief of staff at the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, said the first wave of money for harm reduction supplies was quickly spent by nonprofit providers such as the Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance in Hartford and Liberation Programs in Bridgeport.

“Those funds were rapidly utilized,” McClure told the committee members. “There was clearly demand for it.”

The committee members continue to accept and review other ideas for how to spend the opioid settlement funds.

And the committee leaders said they could vote on other funding proposals in the near future, including plans to install naloxone vending machines in various Connecticut communities.

Another Bridgeport man gets prison in cross-country narcotics operation

By Justin Muszynski
Hartford Courant

Another Bridgeport man has been sentenced to prison in connection with a drug trafficking operation involving narcotics that officials say originated in Mexico before being shipped to Connecticut from California.

Jeffrey Thomas, 51, also known as “Zig,” faced sentencing Thursday in federal court in New Haven, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Connecticut.

He was handed down a sentence of 125 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release, officials said.

Thomas’ sentencing came after a jury in October 2022 found him, Wallace Best and Jason Cox guilty of one count of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute kilogram quantities of heroin and fentanyl, according to federal officials.

Frank Best and his uncles, Thomas and Wallace Best, were also found guilty of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute heroin, fentanyl and cocaine base (“crack”).

Additionally, Frank Best was found guilty of five counts of possession with intent to distribute, and distribution of, heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine base.

Federal authorities said Thomas

was previously convicted of a federal narcotics trafficking offense in 2002 and he was sentenced to 262 months in prison in that case. He was released from prison in January 2019 and was on federal supervised release at the time of the new charges, which was a violation of the conditions, officials said.

According to federal authorities, Thomas, Cox, Wallace Best and Frank Best were implicated when multiple agencies initiated an investigation in 2019 into an organization that was distributing heroin, fentanyl and crack cocaine in and around Bridgeport.

During the operation, the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Bridgeport High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force — which headed up the investigation — made four controlled purchases of heroin and fentanyl from Frank Best.

Authorities also used court-authorized wiretaps and hundreds of what were described as “consensual recordings,” which revealed that Thomas and Wallace Best were supplying Frank Best and others with narcotics, federal officials said.

Authorities also found that Thomas worked with Jason Cox to establish a connection to Mexican-sourced drug suppliers in California who could provide “kilogram quantities” of narcotics for distribution on the East Coast.

Branford man convicted of threatening to kill children

A Branford man has been convicted of several threatening charges after authorities said he harassed three people over the course of a year and made numerous vulgar threats, including those involving murder, rape and child abduction.

Samuel Foley, 26, was found guilty by a jury in New Haven Superior Court on Wednesday, according to the state Division of Criminal Justice.

The charges he was convicted of include eight counts each of first-degree threatening with a firearm and second-degree harass-

ment by telephone and five counts each of second-degree threatening and second-degree harassment by written communication, officials said.

According to authorities, between May 2021 and May 2022, Foley made numerous phone calls and sent hundreds of text messages to victims that included threats of “murder, rape, sexual assault with guns and knives, child abduction, violent and sexually explicit pornographic images.”

Authorities said Foley also made threats about murdering the victims’ children and committing

shootings at their schools.

“Foley called each victim hundreds of times and masked his phone number using Voiceover Internet Protocol spoofing applications,” officials wrote.

According to officials, Foley was arrested by the FBI at the border of Mexico and California. He was extradited to Connecticut in August 2022 to face charges in the harassment complaints, court records show.

The investigation was conducted by the Connecticut State Police as well as the Madison and Branford Police Departments.

Foley is being held on bonds totaling \$405,000 while he awaits sentencing, which is scheduled for Aug. 7, records show.

— Justin Muszynski

Gym

from Page 1

More than a half dozen other gyms operate in the city ranging from Healthtrax and Bell City CrossFit to outlets of the national Powerhouse Gym and Planet Fitness chains. Just a few doors from the GA Fitness building is Edge Fitness’s Bristol location.

“I joined Edge my first day here, and I’ve been training over there for about four weeks, doing reconnaissance,” Montgomery said after a brief ceremony Tuesday morning to meet community leaders. “I know that what we can bring to the table here is going to compete against that.”

GF Fitness will offer corrective stretching, stability training, personal training and up to 40 weekly classes.

“We’ll bring in specialty equipment that nobody else has. We’ll have about nine pieces of equipment that none of our competitors have,” including a belt squat machine and a standing bench press, Montgomery said.

L A Fitness was a pioneer in the Bristol market when it launched its sprawling, upscale fitness center in 2008 in the newly constructed building at 1379 Farmington Ave. L A Fitness set itself apart from smaller, more traditional gyms with bright colors, super-high ceilings, lots of cardio equipment, a whirlpool, a

sweeping curved mezzanine and plenty of windows showcasing the pool.

Not long ago, the company shifted the Bristol gym to its Esporta Fitness brand, and then last fall indicated that it wouldn’t be renewing the lease. The gym shut down altogether in March, leaving city officials concerned about the prospect of an empty big-box building that was designed to be a gym — and expensive to remodel into something else.

The city’s economic development team worked with Vance Taylor of the Torrington-based Commercial Real Estate Group, and attracted the attention of Montgomery. His GF Fitness chain owns and operates gyms in Georgia, and was looking to expand to a new market and begin franchising.

Montgomery has brought Dan Bingham, a veteran fitness center manager from the South, to Bristol to establish the GF Fitness operation and build a local team of managers and staff over the next year. The plan is to transfer the business to a franchisee when it’s fully established.

Montgomery started as a sales agent with the former Bally Fitness in the mid-’80s, and went on to be a senior regional supervisor.

“We’ve been doing this about 36, 37 years. We’ve had multiple clubs but this is one of the bigger ones we’ve ever taken over,” he

said. “All I knew about Bristol, Connecticut was ESPN.”

Caggiano said a highlight of the renovated fitness center will be the new indoor pickleball courts, which are being put in the space where L A Fitness had a basketball court.

“We built outdoor pickleball courts through Parks and Recreation, but the biggest need in our town right now is indoor pickleball courts,” Caggiano told Montgomery. “And you’re going to draw so many people to the saltwater pool.”

Jim Sokaitis, a racquetball enthusiast, predicted that GA Fitness’s racquetball courts will be busy with dozens of players from the region as well as state and regional tournaments along with local youth clinics. LA Fitness had five racquetball courts in the center, and Montgomery has decided to retain them all. That gives the GA Fitness operation the biggest and best facility in central Connecticut for tournaments, Sokaitis said.

“These racquetball folks want to stay here. We want racquetball to succeed here and we think it will,” Sokaitis said.

While construction continues, GA Fitness is offering a \$29 per month rate and is guaranteeing new members that they can lock it in for the duration of their membership. The regular rate will be around \$40 or a bit more, Montgomery said.

Overdose

from Page 1

After taking the drugs, the friend told state police that the victim passed out in the car on the way to a party at the dealer’s house. She was unable to get out of the car, so was taken back to another friend’s house for the night. There, the friend and another person put the woman on the couch to sleep and went to bed themselves, the warrant affidavit said. But the woman never woke up.

The friends, referred to as Witnesses 1 and 2 in the warrant affidavit, told police they woke up the next afternoon and found the woman still on the couch but unresponsive and called 911.

The woman was pronounced dead shortly after paramedics arrived and tried to administer CPR, according to the warrant affidavit.

A medical examiner said she had alcohol, fentanyl and cocaine in her blood and died of “acute intoxication by the combined effects of fentanyl and alcohol,” the warrant affidavit said.

Robinson’s arrest came after an extensive investigation into the woman’s death that ranged from reviewing phone records to showing a photo lineup to multiple witnesses who identified Robinson as an alleged drug dealer who went by the names “G” and “G-Unit,” according to the warrant affidavit.

State police first interviewed Robinson at his probation officer’s office in November 2022. He allegedly told investigators he did not know the woman who died very well despite having a tattoo, visible to state police on his forearm, of peas in a peapod next to the woman’s date of birth and the date she died, the warrant affidavit said.

He also denied going by the nicknames “G” or “G-Unit” or selling narcotics, state police said.

Investigators, however, allege that he “knowingly sold the decedent a strong dose of fentanyl, which contributed to her death,” according to the warrant affidavit.

State police interviewed one of the woman’s cousins, who claimed that they called Robinson immediately after finding out the woman died, asking if he had seen her the night before.

The cousin told state police that Robinson allegedly confessed to meeting the victim and her friend “at the Fabyan Bridge to sell them what he claimed were Percocet pills,” the warrant affidavit said.

“G” seemed distraught, saying this was the one time he sold something like this and he ended up killing one of his best friends,” the cousin told state police, according to the warrant affidavit.

Although the pills tested positive for fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid, and Tramadol, they were marked with the markings that would be on prescription Oxycodone, state police said.

State police allege that the pills were made to look like legitimate prescription tablets and that “the victim, believing she was sold Percocet, unknowingly ingested fentanyl and later died as a result,” according to the warrant affidavit.

State police reviewed the victim’s phone records and found multiple calls and texts to someone stored in her phone as “G-Unit” that allegedly involved coordinating a meeting time and place the night before she died, the warrant affidavit said.

The phone number linked to “G-Unit” was allegedly connected to a phony name and address, state police said. But after state police received an anonymous email containing a photo of Robinson outside a bar in Danielson, Putnam law enforcement officers helped identify Robinson as the dealer who allegedly went by that name, according to the warrant affidavit.

Multiple witnesses reportedly identified Robinson in a photo lineup as the person, and dealer, they knew as “G,” including a bartender who worked at Charlee Bravos for nearly 20 years.

Robinson was taken into custody Wednesday by multiple law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Marshals Service and Connecticut State Police Troop D.

He was being held on a \$150,000 bond and was scheduled to appear in court in Danielson on Thursday, records show.

Hartford Courant

Thursday, May 16, 2024

Finding a new purpose

Former clothing store to be transformed into specialty market. It's part of a broadening array of cuisines



The former EbLens clothing store located on Farmington Avenue. Aaron Flaum/Hartford Courant

BY STEPHEN UNDERWOOD HARTFORD COURANT

A new market specializing in South Asian cuisine is slated to come to Bristol inside the former EbLens clothing store on Farmington Avenue, according to the city.

The owners of Desi Spice LLC filed a building permit application on May 10, according to the city's Building Department. The application would allow the new owners to conduct renovation work, including building out a kitchen and shelving space.

The applicants, listed as Mahesh Sanakkayala of South Windsor and Pradeep Ravella of Vernon, are also the planned owners of the market. Mahesh also owns Spice Town Indian Grocery in Vernon.

Though Asian American Pacific Islanders make up less than 6% of the state population, the group represents one of the fastest growing communities in the state, according to data from the 2020 Census.

EbLens, which occupied the space at 1290 Farmington Ave. for decades, closed its doors last year. The company announced its liquidation in July 2023 and that all of its 51 stores would close.

Founded in New Britain in 1949 by friends Ebner Glooskin and Leonard Seaman, the business had stores in four other states at its peak.

The specialty grocery market, if it comes to fruition, will be opening in a high traffic retail corridor along Route 6 near Walmart. There are nearly 30,000 vehicles per day that travel along the busy roadway, according to city data.

New England Retail Properties, a company that specializes in retail center leases and sales, is representing the owner of the building. Located in the same building on the other side of the former EbLens space is a Noble Nails & Spa, Jamaican Kitchen and laundromat.

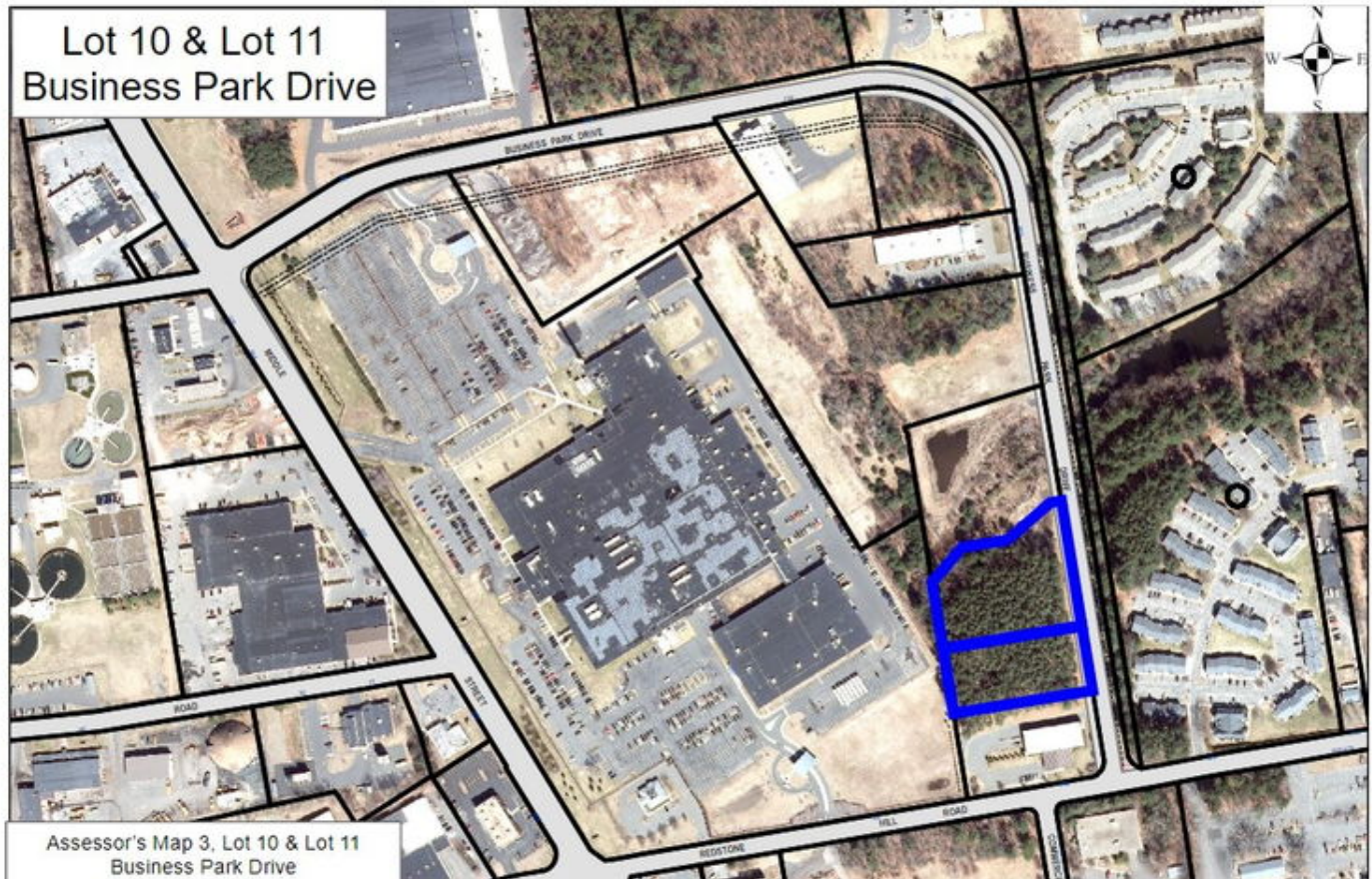
"The property is now 100% leased and hopefully the town will cooperate with their application so they can get open in the next 90 to 120 days," said Matt Halprin, Chief Operating Officer with New England Retail Properties. "We've had several interested parties in that property for the last six to eight months, but it's just a question of qualifications, experience and time frames."

Stephen Underwood can be reached at sunderwood@courant.com

Hartford Business Journal

May 23, 2024

Truck driver training school seeking to buy land in Bristol



CONTRIBUTED

Allstate Commercial Driver Training School wants to buy the two lots highlighted in blue in a Bristol industrial park.

By David Krechevsky

A longtime commercial driver training school is seeking to acquire land in a Bristol industrial park to create a new training facility.

Seymour-based Allstate Commercial Driver Training School is seeking to buy and develop lots 10 and 11 on Business Park Drive in the Southeast Bristol Business Park.

The two wooded lots, which combined total 3.23 acres, are located behind ESPN's North Campus and adjacent to CMI Specialty Products Inc. They also are just west of the Pond

Ridge Condominiums on Redstone Hill Road.

On Monday, the Bristol Planning Commission unanimously approved a motion authorizing Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano to execute a purchase and sale agreement with Business Park LLC, which does business as Allstate Commercial Driver Training School. The LLC is owned by Vincent Maiorano and Christopher Maiorano, who own and operate the school.

A potential sale price for the two lots was not disclosed.

The city's Economic and Community Development board has also approved selling the two lots.

While the commission approved the motion, the City Council has also referred the matter to its Real Estate Committee to schedule a public hearing on the proposal.

According to a proposal and site-plan documents submitted to the Planning Commission, Allstate wants to build a 12,000-square-foot building with 18 parking spaces. The building would house classroom and office space.

The development also would include an outdoor "training field," described as "a paved area with cones to simulate driving maneuvers for students."

Students work one-on-one with instructors, with three to four instructors training approximately 15-25 students daily, the proposal states. Classes would be held seven days a week from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Allstate has operated at 249 Pearl St. in Seymour since 1975. According to its website, it also has a "satellite training and testing location" in Meriden. The proposal states the Bristol site would be a "new campus."

Officials with Allstate could not be reached for comment.

MEMORIAL DAY

Monday, May 27th
there will be no publication, due to the observance of the Memorial Day holiday.



VOL. 153 NO. 127

BRISTOLPRESS.COM

WEEKEND EDITION, MAY 25/26, 2024

\$2.50

The Bristol Press

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U.S. flag

Flag retirement collection underway

PLAINVILLE — With flag day coming up soon, Sen. Henri Martin and Rep. Francis Rexford Cooley are collecting worn and tattered U.S. flags at two drop-off locations in town for proper retirement.

Flags will be collected through Thursday, June 13 at Plainville Town Hall at 1 Central Square and Plainville Public Library at 56 E. Main St. The U.S. Flag Code specifies that old American flags no longer in service must be properly disposed. The collected flags will be delivered to the local VFW for a disposal ceremony.

The Second Continental Congress adopted the first American flag on July 14, 1777, and President Woodrow Wilson declared June 14 to be Flag Day in 1916. Martin is a Republican who represents Bristol, Harwinton, Plainville, Plymouth and Thomaston. Cooley is a Republican who represents Plainville, Southington, and Farmington.

Compounce Water Park open

DYLAN BRACCIA
@THEBRISTOLPRESS

Lake Compounce opens up their water park, Crocodile Cove, to the public this Memorial Day weekend.

Following Lake Compounce opening for weekends on April 29, they now will have the water park open, along with the theme park, starting May 25.

Marketing Director Meg Forno looks forward to the opening.

"We are really excited to open the water park this weekend," Forno said. "We expect to see a good attendance number for this opening."

The water park features it's newest ride, the Storm Surge. Found within the lighthouse, this slide features sounds and lights as you go down.

The rides are also open throughout the park. "It can be a great weekend to ride dry rides, as everyone is looking to get into the water park," Forno

said. The parks famous Wildcat coaster was down all of last year. This year, it is back up and running with renovations.

"It's a smoother ride and a little faster," Forno said. "There has been great feedback on it."

Boulder Dash has also been reinforced with Titan Tracks. These make for a smoother and more comfortable rides, according to Skyline Attractions.

The park is open for



Kids enjoy the sights high atop the water ride at Lake Compounce last year.

60 Years, Counting



Bristol Mayor Jeff Caggiano presents Kathleen Carroll, president of the Bristol Garden Club with a plaque commemorating the club's 60th anniversary.

City Garden Club marks big milestone

BRIAN M. JOHNSON
@BRIANMJOHNSONBP

BRISTOL — City leaders joined the Bristol Garden Club in celebrating their 60th anniversary Thursday at the New England Carousel Museum.

The celebration was held in the event room on the second floor of the museum at 95 Riverside Ave. There were 150 people gathered for the event, including the 50 garden club members and their friends.

Many wore fancy hats and dresses with flowers for the occasion. Tea and hors d'oeuvres were

"I never thought that there were this many people involved in the Garden Club."

MAYOR JEFF CAGGIANO

served and there were floral wreath raffles. The club also had flowers for guests to take home with them at each table. Music from the 1960s played to commemorate the club's founding in 1964 and there was also a collage of historical events from that year on display.

Kathleen Carroll, president of the Bristol Garden Club, said it was "fantastic" and "incredible" that

the club has reached the 60-year milestone.

"We do programs on a wide range of subjects including floral design, conservation and gardens to support habitat for native birds and butterflies," she said. "Two years ago, we also created the Blue Star Memorial on Memorial Boulevard to honor our veterans."

Carroll said that the mis-

sion of the Bristol Garden Club is to stimulate interest and create activity in the art of gardening, enhance the beauty of the community, contribute to the community and work to conserve nature, plants and wildlife.

"We have also donated \$24,000 in scholarships in the past 15 years alone," she said. "We held our 50th anniversary at Chippa-

Golf Club 10 years ago. Now, 10 years later, we are still going strong."

Carroll thanked all of the Bristol Garden Club members who worked to make the 60th anniversary celebration a success.

Mayor Jeff Caggiano; Justin Malley, economic development director; and Dawn Nielsen, marketing and public relations specialist, presented a congratulatory plaque to the Bristol Garden Club for the occasion and their community contributions over the years.

"I never thought that

See GARDEN ON PAGE 4

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The Bristol Press
(ISSN 0891-5563)
is published each morning
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except on federal holidays by
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News Media Inc.

CIRCULATION

For Circulation issues or
questions, call 7:30 am to
4 pm, Monday-Friday and
9 am to 10 am Saturdays.
860-423-8486 ext 1 or email
our circulation department at
delivery@thechronicle.com.
Closed Sundays.

We do not publish a print edition
on federal holidays. We publish
an e-edition in its place.

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POSTAL INFORMATION

The Bristol Press, pending
periodical #25653,
is published 6 days per week
excluding Sunday.
Periodicals postage paid
at Bristol, CT. Post office
address: P.O. Box 229
Willimantic, CT 06226.
Postmaster: Send address
changes to The Bristol Press,
P.O. Box 229
Willimantic, CT 06226.

RATES

Single copy:
Monday - Friday \$2.00
Saturdays \$2.50
SUBSCRIPTION:
One Year: \$375

Garden throws 60th birthday bash

"We also have an active garden therapy committee which runs programs at rehab facilities."

KATHLEEN CARROLL

Continued from Page 1

there were this many people involved in the Garden Club," said Caggiano. "On behalf of our veterans, we are very appreciative for the Blue Star Memorial on our Boulevard that you created during my term. The Bristol Garden Club is a hidden gem in Bristol, just like the New England Carousel Museum."

The city's economic development department has been presenting plaques to many local businesses and organizations for their significant anniversaries.

"Best wishes from the All Heart City and hopefully I will be back to congratulate you again in another 10 years," Caggiano said.

Carroll said that, at the end of World War II, the New Jersey Garden Club lined a highway with white



Crowd shots of Bristol Garden Club members and friends gathered to celebrate the club's 60th anniversary at the New England Carousel Museum.

Brian M. Johnson

dogwood flowers. Since then, it has been a tradition for many garden clubs to have at least one dogwood garden. The Bristol Garden Club has two on Memorial Boulevard, which they maintain year-round.

The Bristol Garden Club also helps to maintain gardens at the American Clock & Watch Museum and New England Carousel Museum. Additionally, they run gardening programs at Cambridge Park and

Imagine Nation, A Museum Early Learning Center.

"We also have an active garden therapy committee which runs programs at rehab facilities," Carroll added.

The Bristol Garden Club

will meet again in June and then resume their monthly meetings in September. They meet on the third Thursday of each month at 10 a.m. at Bristol Public Library at 5 High St., with coffee served at 9:30 a.m.

Water park now open at Lake Compounce

Continued from Page 1

weekends until June 17, where the park will then be open all week, 11 am to 6 pm.

Tickets are currently on sale for \$34.99 through Memorial Day. In purchasing a ticket, you can go any day until July 7. The sea-

son pass starts at \$64.99. "The best way to experience the park is through the season pass," Forno said. Lake Compounce will offer various events

throughout the upcoming months. June will feature their Kids Fest, where kids can meet mascots and characters at the park. In July, they begin their Summer

Concert Series. In August they have their Beach Bash, where they will have a DJ at the beach all day. The park is open 11 am to 7 pm on the weekends.

DEAN'S LIST AND GRADUATES

University of Bridgeport

University of Bridgeport congratulates more than 400 students who were named to the spring 2024 President's List. To be named to the President's List, a student must maintain a term grade point average of 3.7 or higher.

Local students include:

- Tiffany Pires of Terryville
- Monique Johnson of Bristol
- Catherine Miceli of Farmington
- Monica Farley of Southington
- Victoria Nanfita of Wolcott
- Julia Gentile of Wolcott
- Haley Andrews of Southington

University of Bridgeport offers career-oriented undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees and programs for people seeking personal and professional growth. The University promotes academic excellence, personal responsibility, and commitment to service. Distinctive curricula in an international, culturally diverse, and

supportive learning environment prepare graduates for life and leadership in an increasingly interconnected world.

Hofstra University

Nearly 100 Hofstra University first-generation graduates from the Class of 2024 were recognized during Commencement Weekend at the First-Gen Graduation Celebration. Connor McKinley of Bristol was one of the graduates recognized at the event.

The celebration served as an opportunity to honor the unique accomplishment of overcoming barriers facing first-generation students and brought together the Hofstra community to congratulate the graduates on their achievements. Long Island-based Hofstra University's primary mission is to provide a quality education to its students in an environment that encourages, nurtures, and supports learning.

Clarkson University Landon M. Colby of Southington, a sophomore majoring in civil engineering, was named to the Dean's List for the Spring 2024 semester at Clarkson University. Dean's List

students must achieve a minimum 3.25 grade-point average and also carry at least 14 credit hours.

Clarkson University is a proven leader in technological education, research, innovation and sustainable economic development. With its main campus in Potsdam, N.Y., and additional graduate program and research facilities in the Capital Region and Hudson Valley, Clarkson faculty have a direct impact on more than 7,800 students annually through nationally recognized undergraduate and graduate STEM designated degrees in engineering, business, science and health professions.

Stonehill College

Two Bristol residents were among the 625 students processed at Easton, Massachusetts-based Stonehill College's 73rd commencement on Sunday, May 19.

They included Julia Marchiak and Jacob Wozniak.

During the ceremony, Ed Cooley Class of 1994, head coach of the Georgetown University men's basketball team, gave the keynote address.

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Hartford Business Journal

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

CT Dept. of Banking approves merger of Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, First Bristol FCU



PHOTO | CONTRIBUTED

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union will be growing its central Connecticut 10-branch footprint following its merger with First Bristol Federal Credit Union, which has two branches.

By Greg Bordonaro

The state Department of Banking has approved the proposed merger between Rocky Hill-based Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union and First Bristol Federal Credit Union.

The two credit unions in January applied to merge under the banner of Nutmeg, the larger of the two institutions. The merger has all the necessary regulatory approvals and will be effective as of June 1, according to Nutmeg CEO John D. Holt

The \$675 million organization will serve 48,000 members with 10 branches across

Connecticut. Holt will serve as CEO of the combined organization, while First Bristol CEO Mark Cornacchio will remain in a leadership role with the credit union.

First Bristol will operate as a division of Nutmeg until the credit unions' systems and operations are combined early next year, and its two Bristol branches will remain open under the Nutmeg brand.

Nutmeg State Financial Credit Union, chartered in 1935, has 44,201 members and assets of \$610.2 million, according to the NCUA. It has branches in Manchester, Milford, Rocky Hill, Orange, New Britain, Stratford, Glastonbury, Norwalk and North Haven, as well as one for students, parents and faculty at Rocky Hill High School.

The Bristol-based credit union, also launched in 1935, has 5,687 members and assets of \$106.7 million, NCUA data shows.

Holt said the merger will bring growth with new efficiencies and lower overhead costs, for a stronger institution able to provide an array of new products and services to First Bristol members.

The merger continues a long-running trend of consolidation that has dramatically reduced the number of Connecticut credit unions over the past two decades, even as the overall number of credit union members and assets have grown considerably.

NO MORE ARTICLES LEFT



New Canaan Police Department via AP File
 This undated file photo provided shows Jennifer Dulos. Michelle Troconis was sentenced Friday, May 31, in connection with the 2019 disappearance and presumed killing of mother-of-five Jennifer Dulos.

Troconis gets 14.5 years for part in Dulos death

DAVE COLLINS
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

STAMFORD — A woman convicted of helping her boyfriend plot and cover up the murder of his estranged wife, Jennifer Dulos, during contentious divorce and child custody proceedings in Connecticut was sentenced to 14.5 years in prison Friday.

A state judge in Stamford handed down the punishment to Michelle Troconis in the 2019 disappearance of Dulos, whose body has never been found since she disappeared from her New Canaan home.

Troconis, 49, was convicted in March of conspiracy to commit murder, evidence tampering and hindering prosecution. She denies the charges and plans to appeal.

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BARC to move offices downtown

BRISTOL — Bristol Adult Resource Center (BARC) is moving its administrative offices and some programs to downtown Bristol, BARC Executive Director Mary Etter announced at a recent "ground" breaking ceremony.

Programs from Jerome Avenue, as well as administrative offices, will relocate to the fifth floor of 225 North Main St. later this year, Etter said. The renovation project is scheduled to begin next

month. Charlie Talmadge from Development Planning Solutions and Bill Mascetti from ACG are helping BARC with this undertaking.

Approximately 10,800 square feet that previously served as a call center will become BARC's administrative home, new location for current programs, and a site for expanded programs for individuals with autism and other sensory needs.

"We were the recipients of \$1.5 million of ARPA funding from the City of

Bristol, and it's helping us to transform our services," Etter said.

Etter revealed that once the space at Jerome Avenue was vacated, BARC will launch a new work training program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This program will focus on building occupational skills that will enable these individuals to work competitively at area businesses.

"Employers in this area See BARC ON PAGE 4



Susan Sadecki, President and CEO of Main Street Community Foundation and Chair, Nonprofit Subcommittee of the ARPA Task Force, left, BARC Executive Director Mary Etter and Mayor Jeff Caggiano, right.

New place to play



A rendering of the new playground at Seymour Park in Bristol that will officially open on June 5 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Seymour Park playground to open June 5

BRISTOL — The City of Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services Department (BPRYCS) plans to officially welcome a long-awaited new playground at Seymour Park at a ribbon-cutting ceremony

on Wednesday, June 5 at 4:30 p.m.

The new playground on Shrub Road offers increased play opportunities, including numerous features such as a climbing net, swings, multi-spinner carousel, an imaginative

castle and ship design and a play tower for 2- to 5-year-olds.

"It has been exciting to see the vision of Seymour Park come to fruition," said Superintendent Dr. Joshua Medeiros. "The ribbon cutting is a celebration not just for the new playground but the long-overdue revitalization of Seymour Park, which has included the installation of a post-tension concrete basketball court, improvements to the ball field, and six new heavily

utilized pickleball courts. "We're grateful to the community members for being engaged in the revitalization process. It's breathed new life into Seymour Park." BPRYCS presented two See SEYMOUR ON PAGE 4



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One Liberty Square,
New Britain 06050

The Bristol Press
(ISSN 0891-5563)

is published each morning
Monday through Saturday
except on federal holidays by
Connecticut News Media Inc.
Copyright 2022, Connecticut
News Media Inc.

CIRCULATION

For Circulation issues or
questions, call 7:30 am to
4 pm, Monday-Friday and
8 am to 10 am Saturdays.
860-423-8466 ext 1 or email
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Closed Sundays.

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POSTAL INFORMATION

The Bristol Press, pending
periodical #25653,
is published 6 days per week
excluding Sunday.
Periodicals postage paid
at Bristol, CT. Post office
address: P.O. Box 229
Willimantic, CT 06226.
Postmaster: Send address
changes to The Bristol Press,
P.O. Box 229
Willimantic, CT 06226.

RATES

Single copy:
Monday - Friday \$2.00
Saturdays \$2.50
Subscription:
One Year: \$375

Seymour Park gets ready for opening

Continued from Page 1

potential playground design concepts for Seymour Park to the community in July 2023 as part of their ongoing Upgrade Your Play campaign. More than 1,500 votes were cast in response to the call asking residents and community members to select a design.

"The Upgrade Your Play campaign allows us to integrate resident and park user input into the playground design and planning process throughout Bristol's parks. Since the start of the Upgrade Your Play campaign in 2021, BPRYCS has received over 6,000 votes and submissions in response to the call for community input and feedback," explained BPRYCS Community Engagement Coordinator Erica Benoit.

The total cost of the playground project was approximately \$173,000 with a majority of fund-



Seymour Park in Bristol shown before renovations that will be unveiled on June 5.

ing from the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP). Other playgrounds identified as a priority as part of the Upgrade Your Play campaign include Peck Park, Wilson Field, and Federal Hill Green.

"Next, we'll be looking at improvements to Federal Hill Green

and the James Riordan Playground," said Benoit. BPRYCS encourages Bristol community members to visit BristolRec.com and the Parks Project Portal, to subscribe to the monthly BPRYCS email newsletter, and to follow BPRYCS on social media for the latest information.

BARC moving its offices

Continued from Page 1

need workers, and we have people that are eager to work. It's a perfect match," said Ivonne Daigle, BARC's associate executive director

in charge of programs.

Etter mentioned that the organization's new programs will help more people get to work and employers hire much needed workers.

"People with developmental disabilities are dependable employees, and they are also an underutilized workforce. BARC's new training programs will support the missions of local employers."

MARY ETTER

"People with developmental disabilities are dependable employees, and they are also an underutilized workforce," said Etter. "BARC's new training programs will support the missions of local employers by accomplishing tasks previously undone. And our folks will get to work. It truly is a win-win."

"We will be bringing jobs and activity to the area, and we are so excited to be part of Bristol's downtown development," Etter added. "Our program participants and employees will have easy access to everything here in the downtown area."

We will truly be a part of this All Heart community. I believe our founding families would be so pleased to see this happening."

BARC began in 1957 as part of a nationwide grass-roots movement led by families who believed their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities belonged in their communities, not in institutions.

BARC currently oversees two day programs (Jerome Avenue and Lake Avenue) as well as 12 homes in Bristol, supporting 140 individuals and their families and employing over 200 staff members.

Accomplice gets 14.5 years

Continued from Page 1

Prosecutors say Dulos' husband, Fotis Dulos, killed her at her home in New Canaan and drove away with her body, which has never been found. He died by suicide in 2020 shortly after being charged with murder. He had denied killing his wife.

Troconis was living with Fotis Dulos when his wife disappeared. Troconis was convicted in March of conspiracy to commit murder, hindering prosecution and evidence tampering.

Troconis, who is detained in a state prison, maintains her innocence and plans to appeal her conviction.

Jennifer Dulos has not been seen since she dropped her five children off at school on May 24, 2019.

About 80 people packed the courtroom, with Jennifer Dulos' family and friends on one side and Troconis' supporters on the other. All five of Dulos' children, as well as her mother Gloria Farber attended.

Before the sentence was announced, they spoke of their anger and heartbreak.

Farber said she knew "something terrible had happened" when her daughter did not return calls or texts. She said her daughter "only wanted to give and get love and be a loving mother."

Jennifer Dulos' oldest child, 18-year-old Petros Dulos, said his mother's death left him with "a hole inside of me that I know I will never fill."

He said he had been close to his mother but struggled during the divorce.

"The defendant's actions mean that I will never be able to tell my mom how sorry I am for not being a better son when she needed me," he said.

Lauren Almeida, the Dulos family's nanny, asked Troconis: "Where is she, Michelle?"

Jennifer Dulos' disappearance was the subject of documentaries and a made-for-TV movie, Lifetime's "Gone Mom."

She belonged to a wealthy New York City family. Her father, the late Hilliard Farber, founded the brokerage Hilliard Farber & Co. after running Chase Manhattan Bank's bond trading desk. She also was a niece by marriage of fashion designer Liz Claiborne.

Troconis, a dual American and Venezuelan citizen, said she co-founded a horse-riding therapy program, had owned a TV production company in Argentina, and hosted a snow-sports show for ESPN South America. Fotis Dulos was a luxury home builder from Greece.

Troconis' family and friends described her Friday as an upright and caring person.

Her pastor, the Rev. Christopher Solimene of Avon Congregational Church, said Troconis attended Bible study and

cooked for the church soup kitchen. "Her heart is big for all of God's created, especially for children and those afflicted with disability," Solimene said.

Troconis' mother, Marisela Arreaza, said her daughter was a loving mother to her teenage daughter and was not the home wrecker portrayed by Dulos' friends.

"When Michelle met Fotis Dulos, he presented himself as a family-oriented man going through an amicable divorce," Arreaza said. "Michelle believed Fotis and had no reason to doubt him."

Troconis' daughter, Nicole, 17, told Judge Kevin Randolph: "Michelle isn't just my mother. She's my best friend, my rock and my guiding light."

Troconis spoke last, saying: "I am a person of profound faith and I have been praying and continue to pray for those who have suffered and continue to suffer."

Authorities believe Dulos killed his wife because of his growing frustration with their divorce and child custody proceedings.

Jennifer Dulos had been living with the children in New Canaan while Fotis Dulos stayed in the family's 10,000-square-foot (929-square-meter) home about 70 miles (115 kilometers) away in Farmington.

Hours after Jennifer Dulos was last seen alive, surveillance video recorded Troconis accompanying Fotis Dulos on a trip to Hartford, where he discarded trash bags from his pickup truck. Police later found some of the bags after seizing Fotis Dulos' cellphone, checking its location data and obtaining the surveillance video.

At Troconis' trial, the prosecution and state forensic experts showed a shirt, bra and zip ties with blood-like stains that were found in one of the trash bags. DNA testing linked the items to Jennifer Dulos.

Troconis told police she didn't know what was in the bags or why Fotis Dulos dumped them.

Prosecutors also said Fotis Dulos left his cellphone at home on the day Jennifer Dulos vanished and Troconis answered a call to it from his friend that morning. They say that shows Troconis was in on the plot and tried to help him create an alibi. She denied the allegation.

Kent Mawhinney, a friend and former lawyer of Fotis Dulos, is awaiting trial on a murder conspiracy charge in Jennifer Dulos' disappearance. He has pleaded not guilty.

Although Jennifer Dulos' body has never been found, a probate judge declared her legally dead last year. The Dulos children are in Farber's custody in New York City.

Associated Press reporter Karen Matthews contributed from New York City.

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Economic Development/Marketing/Grants/CDBG Report

June 2024

Downtown/West End Updates

- Centre Square:
 - Wheeler Health anticipates the completion of construction in June 2024 with a planned community open house to follow.
 - Carrier continues progress on the first phase of Centre Square Village and anticipates leasing the first units in September 2024
 - Ground work has commenced on the Hope Street Parking Structure, with construction expected to be complete in early 2025.
 - Streetscape design work for North Main Street (in front of Centre Square Village) is ongoing.
 - The final parcel available for development must temporarily be used for parking during the Hope Street Garage construction.
- BARC held its “groundbreaking” ceremony on new office space /program space at Progress Square, 225 North Main Street. This project brings activity downtown while opening up space at BARC’s Jerome Ave. location for additional workforce training.
- An update on the J.H. Sessions project will be provided at the June 6th ECD Board meeting.
- The 2024 Bristol Farmers Market will begin on June 22 at 10 Main Street.
- ECD staff are working with the owners of several downtown commercial buildings/plazas on the potential of new tenants as well as apartment conversions or new apartment construction. Staff will update the board as the projects proceed.
- ECD staff spoke with the owners of the Renew fuel cell project and site concerning the pile of “rubble” on site. The owners had planned to repurpose the rubble as part of the base for the fuel cell pads but may ultimately remove the piles.
- Design for the West End/Downtown bike trail is expected to begin in summer 2024.
- Design for the Route 72 Streetscape is ongoing. To review, the first construction work will take place on Park Street in 2025.

Development Outside Downtown

- Industrial Update: ECD staff will provide a brief update on the Southeast Bristol Business Park at the June ECD meeting.
- Route 6:
 - ECD staff have connected with representatives of the “Dairy Queen” project and are discussing the future of the site.
 - GF Fitness will officially open to the public in June.
 - Fine Fettle is planning a grand opening in late June.
 - Construction on the Prohealth medical building on Route 6 is well underway.
 - ECD staff are working with the owner of an Indian Grocery Store that will occupy the former “Eblens” space.

- Cannabis manufacturing: Bud’s Goods, a cannabis packaging company opening on Cross St., is preparing to open following a facility buildout. The facility will employ approximately 30 full-time individuals. Soundview Edibles is operating on East Main Street at the former Trulieve location. The business employs approximately 10 individuals and is currently adding additional positions.

Business Incentives

Small Business Micro Grants

- Urban Collab Studios: Assisting with a renovation including lighting and soundproofing for a new podcasting studio.
- Hubbard’s Florist (new owner): ECD is assisting with a Small Business Grant application to help with water issues in the basement.
- Pine Street Package Store: ECD is assisting with a Small Business Grant application to help with the cost of new signage infrastructure and fence.
- Bella Mia Salon: Assisting with a Small Business Grant for upgrades to a new store including new flooring and plumbing.

State of CT Urban Jobs Tax Abatement for Manufacturers

- G&M Woodworking: This small manufacturing business is new to Bristol, with a new lease at 210 Redstone Hill Road. G&M is applying for tax assistance via the State-sponsored “Urban Jobs” tax abatement program.

Downtown/West End/Forestville Façade Program

- ECD staff will discuss an active application from Carrier to revamp the façade at 238 Main Street.
- Positano Plumbing is expected to begin its façade project soon, with several other building owners/tenants considering the program.

Forgivable Revolving Loan

- As of June 3, 2024, the Community Investment Fund (CIF) has received 26 inquiries for the loan program and distributed 13 loan application packages. CIC anticipates closing on its first loan this month to help a business purchase the building that it currently leases. CIC is actively working with several well-known Bristol businesses on significant projects.

Marketing

Marketing and Public Relations Initiatives:

- 1) Bristol Business Anniversaries/Site Visits:
 - Bristol Garden Club: 60th Anniversary on May 23, 2024 (see BP article in Communications)
 - Sawes Automotive Services: 35th Anniversary on May 29, 2024 (see BP article in Communications)
 - George’s Terryville Market: 35th Anniversary on June 4, 2024
 - New Gym: A press conference was held on May 14th to announce that GF Fitness will make its debut in CT at the former Esporta Fitness Center on Farmington Avenue;

Mayor Caggiano, Justin Malley, and Dawn Nielsen attended. (See HC and BP articles in Communications)

- Mayor Caggiano, Justin Malley, and Dawn Nielsen visited Golden Years, a new adult daycare business that will be located in downtown Bristol.

Grants Administration

Grant Awards:

Bristol Police Department:

A grant of \$5,000 was awarded by the Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation to the Bristol Police Department, for the second half of their request to outfit the Police Cadets.

Bristol Senior Center:

The Senior Center received a grant of \$2,500 from the Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation to support their SNAP Toiletry Program.

CDBG Program Highlights

- **CDBG Year 50**

The City of Bristol was notified by HUD that the allocation for Program Year 50 will be \$565,213, a reduction of \$22,997 from the previous year. The CDBG Policy Committee met on March 14, and makes the following recommendations to the ECD Board for their approval and referral to City Council for action:

2024-25 Bristol Proposed CDBG Allocation – May 14, 2024

Project/Category	Amount
Housing Rehabilitation	
Residential Rehabilitation*	\$250,812
Support Staff (for Rehab program & projects)	\$125,610
Sub-Total	\$376,422
Public Service (up to 15% of new funding maximum= \$84,781)	
Boys and Girls Club - Cambridge Park Outreach	\$16,000
BristolWorks!	\$4,000
Grace Community Food Pantry	\$4,281
Human Resources Agency - Case Management	\$9,000
Prudence Crandall – Emergency Shelter	\$8,500
Salvation Army Bristol Corps	\$11,000
Shepard Meadows - Scholarships	\$5,000
St. Vincent DePaul Homeless Shelter	\$17,000
United Way of West Central CT – Walsh Summer Work	\$3,000
YWCA – Sexual Assault Crisis Services	\$4,000
Fair Housing	\$3,000
Sub-Total	\$84,781
Public Facilities Projects	\$0
Planning & Administration (up to 20% of new funding maximum= \$113,043)	
	\$104,010
GRAND TOTAL	\$565,213

*\$240,000 for Single Family Residential Rehab Program, \$10,812 for Multi-Family Program.
 THEN add \$55,000 from PI and Reprogrammed funds = \$305,812 for Housing Rehab



DATE: May 29, 2024

TO: Mayor Jeff Caggiano
ECD Board Members

FROM: Justin Malley, Economic and Community Development

RE: City and Town Development Act

Program Background

To help combat high unemployment, blight, and other negative economic conditions in Connecticut communities, the State developed the City and Town Development Act (Act) in 1975. The Act grants certain powers to a municipality upon adoption and ratification. Municipalities may perform several processes to stimulate economic development, including acquiring development property, selling development property, making loans/grants to developers and businesses, offering tax abatements, and more.

In Bristol, benefits under the Act have traditionally been used to incentivize development in the State-established Enterprise Zone, to encourage manufacturing development via a State-sponsored tax abatement program, offering grants/loans to expanding businesses, and more.

Process

Every five years, the governing board of an eligible municipality, in this case the Bristol City Council following approval by the Economic and Community Development (ECD) Board, votes whether or not to continue exercising powers under the Act. Prior to a vote by the City Council, a Public Hearing must be held by the City Council. If the City Council votes to approve the Act following said Public Hearing, Bristol voters are asked to approve the resolution by public referendum. According to the ECD's records, Bristol voters have approved using the Act since 1984.

Requested Action

It is requested that the ECD approve a motion to request that the Bristol City Council schedule a Public Hearing for the City and Town Development Act.

Sec. 7-483. Powers granted to municipalities. In furtherance of the purposes of this chapter, which are hereby deemed to be municipal purposes, for which municipal funds may be expended, each municipality shall, in addition to those powers otherwise conferred by any general statute, special act or municipal charter or ordinance, have the following powers, except as otherwise limited by this chapter, and provided the exercise of such powers by a municipality shall be in accordance with the procedures established by this chapter:

(a) To acquire, receive by gift or otherwise, purchase, acquire options to purchase, own and hold as lessee or lessor any development property which is located within the borders of the municipality. Any lease shall be binding upon the municipality as lessor or lessee, including, without limitation, the term or any extension thereof and the obligation to appropriate funds as necessary to meet rent and other obligations as provided within such lease.

(b) To construct, reconstruct, rehabilitate, improve, alter, equip, maintain or repair or provide for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, alteration, equipment or maintenance or repair of any development property and let, award and enter into construction contracts, purchase orders and other contracts with respect thereto upon such terms and conditions as the municipality shall determine to be reasonable, including but not limited to reimbursement for the planning, designing, financing, construction, reconstruction, improvement, equipping, furnishing, operation and maintenance of any such development property and the settlement of any claims arising therefrom and the establishment and maintenance of reserve funds with respect to the financing of such development property.

(c) To sell, lease as lessor or lessee, grant options to purchase or to renew a lease, assign, exchange, mortgage as security for notes or bonds issued pursuant to section 7-491 or otherwise dispose of or encumber and to manage or operate any development property.

(d) To accept gifts, grants or loans of funds, property or services from any source, public or private, and comply, subject to the provisions of this chapter, with the terms and conditions thereof.

(e) To prepare or cause to be prepared plans, specifications, designs and estimates of costs for the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvement, alteration, equipping, maintenance or repair of any development property, and from time to time to modify these plans, specifications, designs or estimates.

(f) To make mortgage loans or other loans or advances to sponsors as provided in section 7-488.

(g) When it becomes necessary and feasible for a municipality to safeguard itself from losses, to acquire, purchase, foreclose on, manage or operate, hold or dispose of development property, take assignments of rentals and leases and make and enter into all contracts, leases, agreements and arrangements necessary or incidental to the protection of its interests under any law, mortgage contract or agreement.

(h) In order to further the purposes of this chapter or to assure the payment of the principal and interest on bonds or notes of the municipality, to purchase, acquire and take assignments of notes, mortgages and other forms of security and evidences of indebtedness, purchase, acquire, attach, accept or take title to any development property by conveyance or by foreclosure, and sell, lease or rent any development property for a use specified in this chapter.

(i) To borrow money and to issue its bonds or notes or other obligations and to fund or refund the same and provide for the rights of the holders thereof as provided in this chapter.

(j) To charge and collect facility charges as provided in section 7-490.

(k) To make and enter into all contracts and agreements necessary or incidental to the performance of its duties and the exercise of its powers in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter, including contracts and agreements with sponsors.

(l) In connection with any application or commitment for assistance under this chapter, to make and collect such fees and charges as the municipality shall determine to be reasonable.

(m) To make, modify, amend or repeal rules and regulations with respect to its operations, properties and facilities.

(n) To sue and be sued and plead and be impleaded with respect to any action taken pursuant to powers granted by this chapter.

(o) To appoint, employ or retain attorneys, accountants, architectural, engineering and financial consultants, assistants, agents and other employees as it may deem necessary or desirable and to fix their compensation.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE CITY OF BRISTOL ENABLING THE CITY OF BRISTOL TO ASSUME ALL POWERS AND OBLIGATIONS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE CONNECTICUT CITY AND TOWN DEVELOPMENT ACT, CHAPTER 114 OF THE GENERAL STATUTES OF CONNECTICUT, AND RESERVING SAID POWERS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL.

WHEREAS, on August 8, 1975, the Connecticut General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, the City and Town Development Act, Public Act 75-2 of the July, 1975, Special Session of the General Assembly (hereinafter referred to in this resolution as the “Act”) and is amended to date; and

WHEREAS, in order to exercise the powers conferred under the Act – for a period which cannot exceed five years – the City Council of the City of Bristol (hereinafter referred to as the “City Council”) must find and determine by resolution that such conditions exist as described in the Act, and

WHEREAS, as further conditions precedent to exercise of the powers conferred under the Act, such resolution may only be adopted after a public hearing thereof, upon at least five days’ notice published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation within the City of Bristol and upon adoption, such resolution must be submitted to the electors of the City of Bristol, at either a special election or at a regular municipal election, if such regular municipal election is held more than sixty days, but not more than one hundred twenty days, after the adoption of such resolution, and

WHEREAS, no action in the exercise of any powers granted under the provisions of the Act can be undertaken by the City Council without the approval of each such action by the City Council, which approval must be by separate resolution adopted in accordance with the Act, and

WHEREAS, any action taken by the City of Bristol under the provisions of the Act which required the issuance of bonds secured by general fund revenues (secured bonds may not exceed five percent of the grand list) are subject to a referendum if more than five percent of the electors so petition, and

WHEREAS, the ability to exercise the powers conferred upon the City of Bristol by the Act is of key importance for the revitalization of the City of Bristol, and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest that the resolution required under the provisions of the Act, as a condition precedent to the exercise of the powers conferred by the Act, be submitted to the electors of the City at the next regular election, and

WHEREAS, notice of this resolution has been placed on record at the office of the City Clerk for public inspection, and

WHEREAS, 1) a summary of this resolution and 2) notice of a public hearing upon this resolution has been published in a newspaper of general circulation within the City of Bristol at least five days and not more than fourteen days before the aforesaid public hearing, and

WHEREAS, a public hearing upon said resolution has been held in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

IT IS THEREFORE, HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL, that based upon the testimony at the aforesaid public hearing, materials submitted in support of this resolution, and the general knowledge of the members of this City Council, it is hereby found and determined that such conditions as referenced in the Act exist:

1. That an unreasonable number of residents of the City of Bristol are subject to hardship in finding employment and adequate, safe and sanitary housing;
2. That conditions of blight and deterioration exist in the City of Bristol;
3. That private enterprise is not meeting such need for housing, employment, and the reduction of blight and deterioration;
4. That the need for employment and adequate, safe and sanitary housing will be lessened and the City of Bristol will be revitalized by the exercise of the powers granted under the Act;
5. That adequate provisions shall be made for the payment of the cost of acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance and insurance of all development property;
6. That a feasible method exists and shall be utilized for the relocation into safe and sanitary dwellings of comparable rent of families and individuals displaced as a consequence of the exercise of any power granted under the Act and such families and individuals shall not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of action authorized by the Act for the public benefit;
7. That development property shall not be acquired or disposed of without due consideration of the environmental and economic impact of such acquisition or disposition and the adequacy of existing or proposed municipal services; and
8. That the acquisition or disposition of all development property shall advance the public interest, general health, safety and welfare, and development, growth and prosperity of the City of Bristol.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that prior to City Council actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Act to issue bonds or notes, to establish reserve funds, or to exempt in whole or

in part development properties from municipal property taxes, the City of Bristol must provide its written recommendation on each such action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is hereby found and declared that anything contained in this resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, it is the intention of this Council that by adopting this resolution it is conferring upon the City of Bristol, subject to approval of a majority of the persons voting on this resolution at the next regular municipal election all the authorities, powers, rights, and obligations conferred upon municipalities under the provisions of the Act and that upon approval of this resolution by a majority of persons voting on this resolution as aforesaid, the City of Bristol will have sufficiently complied with the Act so as to be able to exercise all the powers conferred upon municipalities under the Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Clerk of the City of Bristol and the Registrars of the Voters are directed to take any and all steps necessary to place this resolution on the ballot at the next regular municipal election held subsequently to the adoption of this resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Act and section 9-369 of the Connecticut General Statutes (1958 Rev.) as amended including but not limited to warning electors, preparing ballot labels, holding the referendum and canvassing the vote on this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall become effective – for a period of five years – upon its approval by a majority of persons voting on this resolution at the next regular municipal election held subsequent to the adoption of this resolution by this Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED to place the following question relative to the continuation of the former adopted Connecticut City and Town Development Act on the ballot at the municipal election to be held on November 5, 2024;

“Shall the City of Bristol approve the City Council Resolution dated _____ that adopts the Connecticut City and Town Development Act, which grants additional authority to aid and promote industrial and other forms of economic development?”



ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: June 3, 2024

TO: Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano
ECD Commissioners

FROM: Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator

RE: Agenda item for June 6, 2024 ECD Board Meeting
Community Development Block Grant Program Year 50 Approval

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is depending upon states and units of local government to administer funds for the primary objective of developing viable urban communities throughout the country. This objective is achieved by addressing decent housing, suitable living environments, and expanded economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. Each state and unit of local government creates its own plans for accomplishments.

The Annual Action Plan (AAP) must relate to the goals and objectives identified in the Consolidated Plan for the 5-year period 2020-2024. Bristol is allocated Community Development Block Grant dollars each year by federal formula. Along with Program Income and Re-Programmed funds, the total allocation of funds is recommended by the CDBG Policy Committee for action by the ECD Board, which then forwards the matter to the Bristol City Council for approval and submission to HUD for final action.

For the year 2024-2025, the HUD allocation is \$565,213. The AAP budget includes anticipated Program Income of \$35,000 and Reprogrammed Funds of \$20,000 for a grand total of \$620,213 available for programming and administration. A complete listing of the grants recommended by the Policy Committee is attached.

ACTION REQUESTED

To approve the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan for the City of Bristol as presented by the CDBG Policy Committee on June 6, 2024, and to forward these recommendations to the Bristol City Council for action.

Motion for June 6 ECD Board Meeting:

Motion to approve the recommendations of the CDBG Policy Committee for the award of subrecipient grant funding for Program Year 50 as follows, and to forward these recommendations to the City Council and Board of Finance for action:

2024-25 Bristol Proposed CDBG Allocation – Program Year 50	
Project/Category	Amount
Housing Rehabilitation	
Residential Rehabilitation*	\$250,812
Support Staff (for Rehab program & projects)	\$125,610
Sub-Total	\$376,422
Public Service (up to 15% of new funding maximum= \$84,781)	
Boys and Girls Club - Cambridge Park Outreach	\$16,000
BristolWorks!	\$4,000
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GRAND TOTAL	\$565,213

*\$240,000 for Single Family Residential Rehab Program, \$10,812 for Multi-Family Program.
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