ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting
Thursday June 6, 2024 5:00pm
Council Chambers, 111 N. Main Street and on Zoom

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

ABSENT: Commissioners Hick and Verikas

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

GUESTS: Charlie Talmadge, Principal, Development Planning Solutions, on behalf of By Carrier, Inc.

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: May 2, 2024

Mayor Caggiano called for a vote to accept the Minutes from the May 2, 2024 meeting. A motion to accept the Minutes was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

Mayor Caggiano called for a vote to accept the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Mills. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

A. Façade Program Grant Application – 238 Main Street

Justin Malley introduced Charlie Talmadge to speak about the Carrier Group project at 238 Main Street (also known as the Funck Building). Charlie advised the Board of their plans to remove the stucco and restore the brick to match the remainder of the building to its original character. He also reported that their site plan is being presented at the Zoning Commission meeting the following Monday, June 10th. Discussion confirmed that the maximum amount of a Façade Grant is $20,000.00 with a 50% match.

Charlie also shared a brief update on the Centre Square project, confirming that applications for the retail spaces are being accepted, while applications for the apartments will be taken closer to when the site is fully completed. Discussion included timeframes for work completion and paving of Main Street.

B. City & Town Development Act

Justin Malley advised that it's time again for the City & Town Development Act to be presented to the City Council and then put before the city residents for a vote. This is required every five years. First the Act would need to be approved by the City Council with a Public Hearing. It would then be provided to the voters on the election ballot in November 2024. This act has been successfully passed each time it's been presented.

Council Member Panioto read the following proposed motion:

Motion to recommend that the City Council approve, following a public hearing, a resolution to adopt the Connecticut City and Town Development Act, and that the following question, or similar, relative to the continuation of the adopted Connecticut City and Town Development Act be placed on the ballot at the election to be held on November 5, 2024:

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

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. Discussion continued, including public outreach with an explanation and verbiage updates (if needed) to best advise city residents about this item and that it will be on the ballot. Mayor Caggiano advised that the final wording for all ballot referendums is decided by the City Clerk.

With no further questions, Mayor Caggiano called for a vote on the proposed motion. All were in favor and the Motion was passed into the record.

C. SEBBP Update

Justin Malley advised that the Southeast Bristol Business Park (SEBBP) Guidelines have been updated to reflect the language approved by the Board at a previous meeting. This is in regards to the Allstate truck driving school that is moving to the location. Copies of the updated guidelines are available to the Board at their request.

Justin advised the Board of several parties interested in Lot #3. One of them asked if the price of the lot could be reduced which is a question for the Board. Discussion was brief with consensus among Board Members that between the current market and the demand for this particular property, the sale price will remain as is at this time. For the record, Lot #3 currently listed at $288,000.00 and Lot #6 is $156,000.00.

Justin asked the Board for guidance on timeframes for applications and presentations before the Board regarding this property. Discussion led to a proposed sixty (60) day period for all applicants going forward. For the current business already working with the ECD staff, it was agreed to extend to them two (2) final weeks.

Commissioner Mills read the following proposed motion:

Motion to maintain the current lot pricing for available lots within the Southeast Bristol Business Park and to give interested parties a maximum of 60 days of due diligence prior to submitting appropriate materials to ECD staff concerning the purchase of available lots.

The motion was seconded by Council Member Panioto. All were in favor and the Motion was passed into the record.

Justin advised the Board that the owner of Lot #8 is delinquent in providing site plan approval in the period of time provided to him. Justin advised Mr. Damaris that either a letter or a visit to the Board is needed to explain the situation. Mr. Damaris is working on this with his attorney.

D. Incentives Update

Justin Malley provided an update on the Revolving Loan Fund which is also covered in this month's Department Report. There have been twenty-six (26) inquiries, several which have been ineligible due to factors not related to credit. The Revolving Loan Fund is for businesses in Bristol and those moving their business into Bristol. Among the inquiries that were deemed ineligible were not-for-profit organizations and businesses outside of Bristol looking for funds for their own communities. Community Investment Corporation (CIC) expects to close on the first loan to Edgewood Wine & Spirits in the coming week. They're a family-owned business and have wanted to own the building they operate in, and this loan will allow them to do that.

E. Downtown Update

Justin Malley discussed the approximately one-acre piece still available at Centre Street. Mayor Caggiano noted that the Hope Street garage will be completed around April 2025. Wheeler opens July 2024 and initial parking will be in the area where the garage will eventually be built.

Mayor Caggiano added that PKL Enterprises wants a 30-apartment building vs. 20 and they will need more parking to accommodate that. The project hopes to be starting middle of 2025. As a reminder, these are the live/work units with work space in the front of the unit and living space in the back. The spaces above those will be apartments.

Mayor Caggiano also advised a new developer has expressed interest in the Mafale's Plaza project. This would be a mixed-use project with twenty (20) apartments above the retail space.

Also noted was Park Plaza where Better Half Brewing had been located. A real estate investment team is making improvements to existing apartments with the potential to include more, and also draw new businesses to the plaza.

Final discussion included two restaurants opening in the former Webster Bank building on Riverside Avenue, Golden Years who cooks their own food for their clients and will provide a take-out option for the community, and development of the former Bristol Press location.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Schmelder suggested that the plantings and landscaping done around the Progress Square area should be shared out to the City's social media channels. There was a brief discussion encouraging the sharing out of various property's seasonal displays as part of beautifying the city.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Goldwasser asked for an update on the re-opening of the Mellen Street Bridge. Mayor Caggiano advised there are some minor items still needed and then it will be cleared to re-open. Commissioner Mills requested an update on the Dodge Village property. Justin Malley responded with follow up information about the stone piles on the site. The property owner advised Justin he intends to use the stones on the property.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Downtown Committee Report

Commissioner Goldwasser provided an update from June 4, 2024 meeting at which developers made their presentations in response to the Sessions Building RFP. Four companies presented: Spectra Development, Michaels, Beacon and NHP. Representatives from the city's consulting partner, Goman & York, were also in attendance. Commissioner Mills was encouraged by the number of workforce rate apartments discussed.

Justin Malley clarified that workforce rate housing is what's considered affordable for those earning between 60% and 120% of area median income. Mayor Caggiano advised that Goman & York used guidelines and a grading system with regards to the feasibility of the developer to complete it and to determine who would best present to the committee.

Next steps include further recommendations based on the presentations made on June 4th. Goman & York now has the proposed financial proformas per developer and they will use those details to further assess best candidates for additional discussions with the city. Justin Malley advised that there will be some assistance needed by the city such as tax incentives. Mayor Caggiano advised that all proposals came in at the $29M mark with a mix in the number of apartments and their sizes. A follow up meeting of the Downtown Committee will be scheduled with Goman & York to continue the selection process.

B. CDBG Policy Committee Report

Commissioner Schmelder advised that some applicants were in person and on Zoom for the last CDBG Policy Committee Meeting held May 9, 2024. Dr. Dawn Leger confirmed that the ECD Board needs to vote on the recommendations which are listed in a proposed motion provided to the Board.

Commissioner Provenzano read the following proposed motion. It was agreed to waive a reading of the proposed allocations. Instead, the motion was brought forward as outlined in the complete motion shown below and dated Thursday, June 6th, 2024:

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=	
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=	$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

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. Dr. Leger noted that during the Public Comment timeframe, the Annual Action Plan is available for viewing at the City's website. This is submitted to HUD when all the recommendations are approved. Commissioner Schmelder commented news from St. Vincent DePaul regarding the significant rise in the elderly among the homeless. Dr. Leger emphasized that this is an issue across the state. Contributing factors include increased rents pricing people out of their homes. It was agreed that this topic should be part of the discussion for the five-year CDBG plan.

Discussion ended with no changes to the proposed motion. All were in favor and the motion passed into the record.

C. City Council Member Report

There was nothing to report.

IX. Adjournment

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mills made the motion to adjourn which was seconded by Council Member Panioto. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary