

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:00pm

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

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Commissioner Schmelder (Zoom), Council Member Dickau, Commissioners Mills, Rasmussen-Tuller, Goldwasser, Hick, Provenzano, and Cowdell

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley - Executive Director, Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator, and Dawn Nielsen - Marketing & Public Relations Specialist

GUESTS: Mike Goman, Bradley Senft and Derek O'Connor – Goman & York (Zoom)
Andrea Keeney and Meg Close - The Michaels Group (Zoom)

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:01pm and led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to move agenda item V. New Business A. 273 Riverside Avenue up for discussion. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All were in favor and the motion passed.

V. New Business

A. 273 Riverside Avenue Update

Justin Malley introduced Andrea Keeney and Meg Close from The Michaels Organization as a meet and greet with the Board and as the preferred developer in discussion with the city for the former J.H. Sessions building at 273 Riverside Avenue.

Meg Close identified members of their development team for the Board: The Michaels Organization, TAT, D'Amato Construction, Boys & Girls Club of Bristol, and Public Archeology Laboratory. She highlighted projects and the company's mission in the framework of the company's 50-year history. Andrea Keeney presented their plans for 273 Riverside Avenue which included amenities, maintaining the historic integrity, and resident parking.

Commissioner Goldwasser commented positively on the plans for not only the building, but the surrounding property. Justin Malley advised the Board that The Michaels Organization had recently toured the location, and the unique perspective they're bringing to the project. It was noted that consultants will be on site to take measurements of the building to provide more accurate square footage details.

Mike Goman from Goman & York spoke to The Michaels Organization's thoroughness and detail in their preliminary planning. Goman & York is the city's consultant through the process, providing a variety of guidelines including a project time table and assistance with the final transfer of the property.

Additional discussion included funding details that The Michaels Organization are preparing for the city. Those details will ensure the proposal is accurate as there is an anticipated financial ask of the city. Justin Malley also confirmed that 273 Riverside Avenue is currently owned by the city.

Mayor Caggiano took this time to introduce the ECD Board's newest members, Commissioner Liz Cowdell and Council Member Mark Dickau to those present.

II. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the August 1, 2024 Regular Meeting

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the August 1, 2024 ECD Board Meeting. The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. There were no changes or corrections to the Minutes, 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 motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mills. There was no discussion or questions regarding the materials. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

VI. New Business

B. Façade Grant: 350 Riverside Avenue

Justin Malley advised the Board of a Façade Grant in process with the owners of 350 Riverside Avenue where Creative Jam is located. This is a repainting project currently in process and is expected to take three weeks to complete. The grant award is 50% up to \$20,000.00. The mayor called for a motion to accept the Façade Grant report. Commissioner Mills made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor and the report was accepted into the record.

C. BOF Transfer Request

Justin Malley reviewed the Board of Finance Transfer Request with the main item being to replenish the Façade Grant account which is growing in popularity and demand.

Mayor Caggiano called for a reading of the motion for the BOF Transfer Request. Commissioner Provenzano read the motion as follows:

To approve the transfer of \$75,000 from the "Economic Development Expenses" account to the "Façade Improvement Grant Program" account; to approve the transfer of \$7,348.33 from the "Development Grant – Ctr Square" account to the "Façade Improvement Grant Program" account; to approve the transfer of \$750" from the "CDBG Conferences and Memberships" account to the "CDBG Advertising" account.

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

D. BristolWORKS! Update

Justin Malley discussed the BristolWORKS! program results shared out to the Board ahead of the meeting. The Bristol WORKS! report shows data regarding the classes they offer, job placements secured both during and after students are enrolled, pursuit of further education beyond the initial classes, and the overall betterment of participant's earning potential and careers. Classes are free to Bristol residents.

Commissioner Goldwasser noted that BristolWORKS! is fulfilling the ARPA Task Force funding goal of having a "transformational impact on the community". Commissioner Schmelder advised that the report provided to the Board was made available to the ARPA Task Force in response to a request for a progress update. Mayor Caggiano added that the ARPA funding for BristolWORKS! runs through 2026.

Dawn Nielsen announced that BristolWORKS! was nominated for a Municipal Awards through Connecticut Conference of Municipalities who has an annual conference in December where the award will be announced. Commissioner Hick suggested following BristolWORKS! on social media for the success stories they share. Commissioner Mills is interested in partnering BristolWORKS! with the Boys and Girls Club to share the job training.

Commissioner Schmelder excused himself from the meeting at 5:49pm.

The mayor requested a motion to accept the report. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor and the report was accepted into the record.

E. Marketing Update

Justin Malley and Dawn Nielsen introduced a new marketing venture to the Board. With technological changes and ways to communicate having evolved and advanced over the past 10 years, the current focus is learning how to advertise to the younger generations.

ECD is partnering with WORX, a company who will conduct demographic research and analysis to help fine tune marketing efforts to those between the ages of 18 and 43 years old. WORX will provide information allowing the city to more efficiently and more creatively invest its limited marketing dollars to those in this younger demographic who may want to live, work and visit Bristol. The project will take three to four months to complete.

Discussion included positive feedback from the Board in response to the proactive steps being taken by ECD staff to improve the marketing of Bristol, and also the preliminary steps being taken to lay that groundwork.

F. Downtown Update

Mayor Caggiano moved Downtown Update to the end of the Agenda as the Board would be touring Centre Square with Charlie Talmadge representing by Carrier before adjourning the meeting. The owner of Pure Foods, a local eatery moving into one of the retail spaces in Centre Square, will be on site to speak to the Board.

VII. New Business by Commissioners

There was no New Business by Commissioners.

VIII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Provenzano asked about the Community Investment Corporation (CIC) draft report provided to the Board ahead of the meeting. Justin Malley reviewed the new Revolving Loan Program that launched in 2024 in partnership with CIC. The draft report is the first of what will be regular notifications outlining the status and progress of loans from inquiry to repayment.

Commissioner Hick asked about 894 Middle Street. Justin Malley advised that they are moving into the RFP stage of the project. Goman & York is the consultant for the city on this property as well.

Commissioner Goldwasser asked about promoting the construction changes downtown leading to the improvements that are in progress. Justin Malley advised a new video in the "Pardon Our Dust" campaign was received and will be edited further before it is launched.

There was no other further Old Business presented by the Board.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. City Council Member Report

There was no City Council Member Report.

At 6:11pm the Board moved from Council Chambers to the Centre Square project across from City Hall for a tour of the newly constructed mix use building. Adjournment

was delayed until after the tour and was communicated to the Recording Secretary to place into the record.

I. Adjournment

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:09pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary