

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular
Meeting

Thursday July 7th, 2022

5:00pm

City Hall West Meeting Room 1 – 111 North Main St.

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Council Member Panioto, Commissioners Schmelder, Mills, Rasmussen-Tuller, Goldwasser, and Verikas

ABSENT: Commissioners Hick and Commissioner Massarelli

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

GUESTS:

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:04 P.M. Board members completed a brief round of introductions as new board members were present.

II. Public Participation

Mayor Caggiano invited members of the public to address the Board. No one accepted.

III. Minutes – June 2, 2022

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to accept the Minutes from the meeting of June 2nd, 2022, seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All Commissioners present voted in favor and the minutes were accepted into record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development Grants/Marketing Report

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to accept and file Consent Agenda items A and B, seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All commissioners present voted in favor and the Consent Agenda items were accepted into record.

V. New Business

A. Centre Square Update

Justin Malley introduced Jared Gumula from Five West Designs, Gino Carrier and Charles Talmadge from The Carrier Group. Five West and Carrier presented updates and site plans of the Centre Square village project, reporting that plans are 95% complete. The three phase project combines apartments, retail and restaurant space. Phase one includes a fourth floor apartment which is unique to that section.

Parking was discussed and includes a lot, carport and parking garage. Commissioner Schmelder asked about retail parking space and the aesthetics of the planned retaining wall. Justin Malley clarified that Wheeler Health parking in the same area will be available for use after 5pm on weekdays and all weekend, street parking will remain, and a July 12th meeting is scheduled with the ECD to review the addition of the 4th floor apartment and parking. Mayor Caggiano indicated potential for a bus hub by this project's new parking garage.

Phase Three of the plan will be leased back to the City of Bristol with 80 or 90 spaces for the next 18 to 24 months for City Hall use until construction begins. Council Member Panioto asked about parking next to the existing McDonald's. Mayor Caggiano noted that McDonald's was previously granted one way access to their restaurant from anything built on this site. The next step for Five West Design is to submit for site plan approval in August 2022.

Council Member Panioto asked about traffic flow on North Main Street. Justin confirmed that the flow of traffic shouldn't change with the exception of the one cement island at the Center Street crosswalk to City Hall being removed.

B. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

Justin Malley confirmed approval was received for additional downtown infrastructure funds and that the ARPA Task Force has been generous with approval for \$800,000 in addition to the \$150,000 already awarded. The Farmington Avenue fire hydrant infrastructure project in the Chipotle and Starbucks area for \$22,500 and is moving forward with demo expected in the week, and the former Ruby Tuesday building dropping. Commissioner Goldwasser noted that how Bristol handled ARPA is being used as a model for other cities in the State.

Capital Improvement portion Building Bristol Program process and materials have been set up but due to bandwidth with existing 30+ contracts in process, the outreach to area businesses has yet to begin. The \$2,000,000 has already been awarded and set aside. UHY and the Bristol ECD are in partnership. Commissioner Goldwasser commented that UHY has been doing a great job. Commissioner Schmelder noted the ARPA's assistance helped move this important project along.

C. J.H. Sessions Building Update

Justin Malley and Mayor Caggiano are meeting with the City's land bank with the State in two weeks to discuss moving this property to them so abatement can begin. The developer remains committed to the project and trying to close their funding gap. Commissioner Schmelder asked for a way to track the progress and the players. Dawn Nielsen is identifying the project items. Commissioner Goldwasser indicated the Board is very supportive but likes this being accelerated to avoid winter expenses. Mayor Caggiano noted that we have the funds from the state to clean this property and it will be done no matter what happens.

D. Budget Transfer

Justin Malley identified the motion to replenish the Small Business Grant and Manufacturing Technical Assistance accounts which are ECD's two most frequently accessed programs. Andrew Armstrong runs these and has been actively awarding the grants. Commissioner Schmelder read the motion requesting \$50,000 from the ECD Expense account to the Small Business Grant and \$25,000 from the ECD Expense

account to the Manufacturing Technical Assistance. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion, and the Board was unanimous in its approval.

E. Community Investment Fund (CIF)

CIF is a unique and lucrative grant opportunity offered by the State of CT with limited communities eligible to apply. Project scope is broad and includes not for profits. The City is looking for construction funding for the Riverside Avenue and Park Street streetscape. ECD has been involved with a 2021 study for that area. Engineering has been covered by the city. Individual applicants include the developer at Sessions that has a funding gap, the Carousel Museum, the American Legion, and the DAV. The State CIF contact suggests applicants combine efforts to make a joint Rt. 72 corridor project. Commissioner Goldwasser asked about the origins of each project and cost. His question was echoed by Commissioner Schmelder and Council Member Panioto. Justin Malley advised they are the individual projects spearheaded by each requestor.

Mayor Caggiano stepped out of the meeting at 5:55pm

Dawn Leger advised the State wants to see large projects that will transform the community, address the lower income population, social justice issues, etc., and these all fall in Bristol's opportunity zone. Projects have to be shovel ready to apply. No city dollars are used and there is no city match. Justin Malley and Dawn Leger both emphasized this is state funding and the combined application is at the suggestion of the State. Applicants would like to apply in July rather than later in 2022.

Motion to approve the application filing up to \$30M was read by Commissioner Andrew Rasmussen-Tuller. Commissioner Mills seconded the motion. Discussion continued with option to table this motion as a special session, or to not approve it. Commissioner Mills noted that the funds coming to Bristol is the main question behind the vote. The motion was passed 4 to 2, and will be presented to City Council.

F. CDBG Year 47 Annual Action Plan – Approve and Send to City Council

Dawn Leger requested approval of the revision of the annual action plan following the third public hearing for submission to HUD. Commissioner Goldwasser motioned and read the action plan which was seconded by Council Member Panioto. There was no additional discussion and the plan passed unanimously.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Council Member Panioto asked for a Parcel 10 City Square update. Justin Malley advised that the City has a contract with the developers that protects both parties. Any development must be approved by this Board. Contract states that permits must be pulled by January 2023, construction must start by June 2023. The abatement for the City Place project was approved. Commissioner Goldwasser saw notice of the property being for sale on social media. Justin Malley advised that the developer is looking for an equity partner and the City has plenty of authority to address any changes to the project.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Mills commented on how terrific the renovated Memorial Boulevard School looks especially lit up at night with Commissioner Schmelder praising the overall

appearance. Dawn Nielsen announced preliminary plans for August 17th through the 20th there will be public tours of the school.

The Mayor returned to the meeting at 6:20pm

VIII. Any Other Business

A. City Council Member Report

Nothing to report.

Commissioner Goldwasser called for a motion to move to Executive Session. The motion was made by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller and seconded by Commissioner Mills. The Board convened to the Executive Session at 6:25pm.

IX. Executive Session

A. Downtown Grant Application

B. Economic Development Grant Application

Executive Session ended at 6:45pm.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve the grant for Platinum Car Wash. Commissioner Mills seconded it and the motion to approve the grant was unanimously passed.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to table the grant for M & M Pallet. Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller seconded it and the motion to table the vote was unanimously passed.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council Member Panioto with all members in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary