ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 6, 2025 5:00pm
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street and on Zoom

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Mills

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley - Executive Director, Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator, Dawn Nielsen - Marketing & Public Relations Specialist, and David Sgro – Housing & Project Director (Zoom)

GUESTS:
Jimmy Driscoll - Jimmy's on the River
JR Rusgrove – Pure Foods
Patrick Carrier – Principal, Carrier Group
Brian Zadrozny – President, BFZ Electric
Brian Kelley, Nadia Baz, and Rachel Rosa – WORX Branding
Charlie Talmadge – Principal, Development Planning Solutions
Gino Carrier – President, Carrier Construction
Attorney Tim Furey – Furey, Donovan, Cooney & Dyer
Mike Goman – Principal, Goman + York
Attorneys Tom Conlin and Jeffrey Steeg – Corp Council, City of Bristol

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:00pm, and lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum was present. Board Members and ECD Staff introduced themselves.

II. Public Participation

Jimmy Driscoll, 19 Knob Hill Lane, owner of Jimmy's on the River, thanked the Board for the grant provided to the business. The grant allowed for improvements to the property.

JR Rusgrove, Pure Foods, also thanked the Board for the funding approval for their new location at 10 Centre Square. He thanked the Board for their overall support of so many projects in the city. Mr. Rusgrove said additional new hires have already being brought on with growth at the new location already presenting itself.

Justin Malley spoke on Mr. Rusgrove's behalf regarding a modification request to the guidelines of the Revolving Loan Program funding awarded to Pure Foods. The program states that a downtown restaurant needs to remain open until 8:00pm. Mr. Rusgrove shared that economically, they're prepared to stay open until 8:00pm in the spring and summer, but they're requesting a modification for fall and winter.

Commissioner Goldwasser expressed his support for the request, and put forth the motion to approve the modified hours for Pure Foods as stated. Justin Malley clarified that the guideline in question only addresses hours of operation, not a certain number of days, or times of the year. Commissioner Provenzano seconded the motion. There was no further comment or discussion, all were in favor, and the motion to approve the modified hours was accepted into the record.

At this time, Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to move Agenda item **V. New Business, A. Industrial Update** up in the agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor, and the agenda item was moved up for immediate discussion.

V. New Business

A. Industrial Update

Patrick Carrier spoke to the proposed use of property that includes land at the park and neighboring land owned by Mr. Damaris. The proposed project will provide flex space for growing companies, such as electricians, plumbers, or painters. Each building will be 2,000 square feet and can be set up to meet the business' needs. There will be no outside storage, and each building will be managed by the Carrier Group as the sole owner.

Brian Zadrozny spoke to the Board regarding his planned move to one of the buildings proposed by the Carrier Group. His business, BFZ Electric, began in his home, with some moves that required larger spaces as the company grew. They plan to utilize the 15,000 square foot space at the front of this proposed project as they've outgrown their latest location.

Discussion of BFZ Electric followed, including the prefabrication of pieces in the shop which allows for greater efficiency when on the job site. The prefabrication shop also provides training for young people, including many Bristol residents who later become electricians.

This presentation was an introduction of the project and is not yet ready for a vote. In time, this will come before the ECD Industrial Committee and then the ECD Board for approvals.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to move Agenda item **V. New Business, B. Marketing Report** up in the meeting. Commissioner Provenzano made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the agenda item was moved up for discussion.

V. New Business

B. Marketing Report

Representatives from WORX Branding spoke about the marketing survey they conducted as commissioned by ECD Staff. The survey contained 26 questions and yielded 238 participants over a two-and-a-half-month period. The age range included those 24- to 34-years-old, representing a variety of life stages. The goal of the survey was to identify deciding factors for those in this demographic, and use that information to more efficiently market Bristol as a desirable place to live, work, and set down roots.

WORX presented information including survey details and results, and the lifestyle personas, or characters, they created based on the data they gathered to best represent the various needs that were identified. Some next steps for marketing were also provided, including the use of specific online sites that are highly used by this group.

Some key takeaways include that this demographic is savvy, driven by information and fact-based data. They do their research, and personal references hold value for them. An active, culturally interesting social life is desired, with a huge desire to have a meaningful social network. Safe schools with good school ratings are also key.

Note: Detailed presentation materials are included as the last pages of the in the IV. Consent Agenda, A. Communications portion of this meeting's agenda packet found in CivicClerk: [*https://bristolct.portal.civicclerk.com*](https://bristolct.portal.civicclerk.com)

At this time the mayor called for a motion to move into Executive Session. The motion was made by Commissioner Hick, and was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor, and the Board moved into Executive Session at 5:49PM. Commissioner Schmelder excused himself.

IX. Executive Session

A. 894 Middle Street Proposal

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to come out of Executive Session. Commissioner Hick made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor, and the Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the Regular Meeting at 6:32PM.

The mayor verified that no votes were taken during Executive Session. He also asked Commissioner Goldwasser to make a motion to waive the reading of the written motion due to the length of it, with confirmation that all the Board Members had previously read it. Commissioner Goldwasser put the motion forward, noting that the agreed upon purchase price of $625,000.00 needed to be added to the motion for the record. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kearney- Gonzales. All were in favor, and the reading of the motion was waived.

The motion read as follows:

Motion

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 Carrier Construction Inc. or its assigns for the sale of 894 Middle Street Lot 17, 17-3, 17-4-1 as recorded on the A-2 Survey Map known as Property/Boundary Topographic Survey 894 Middle Street by Civil 1 for the purchase price of $625,000.00 for purposes of the construction of an industrial development that includes approximately seven (7) buildings and approximately 25-46 tenant spaces to accommodate tenant companies including but not limited to manufacturers, contractors, and similar uses allowed by the Bristol Zoning Regulations.

Further, pending the legal acquisition of 894 Middle Street Lot 17, 17-3, 17-4-1 by Carrier Construction, Inc. or its assigns for purposes of converting the subject properties to an industrial development that includes approximately seven (7) building and approximately 25-46 tenant spaces, to approve the following tax abatement schedule for ***Phase I*** *the properties known as 894 Middle Street Lot 17, 17-3, 17-41:*

- *Construction Year #1 (period to begin following property closing): 100% real property abatement on the value of property improvements*
- *Construction Year #2: 100% real property abatement on the value of property improvements*
- *Year #1 (period to begin following issuance of a certificate of occupancy for Phase I): 100% real property abatement attributable to the value of improvements*
- *Year #2: 100% real property abatement*
- *Year #3: 50% real property abatement*
- *Year #4: 40% real property abatement*
- *Year #5: 30% real property abatement*
- *Year #6: 20% real property abatement*
- *Year #7: 10% real property abatement*

Further, pending the legal acquisition of 894 Middle Street Lot 17, 17-3, 17-4-1 by Carrier Construction, Inc. or its assigns for purposes of converting the subject properties to an industrial development that includes approximately seven (7) building and approximately 25-46 tenant spaces, to approve the following tax abatement schedule for ***Phase II*** *of the properties known as 894 Middle Street Lot 17, 17-3, 17-41:*

- *Construction Year #1 (period to begin following the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for Phase I of the project): 100% real property abatement on the value of property improvements*
- *Construction Year #2: 100% real property abatement on the value of property improvements*
- *Year #1 (period to begin following issuance of a certificate of occupancy for Phase II): 100% real property abatement attributable to the value of property improvements*
- *Year #2: 100% real property abatement*
- *Year #3: 50% real property abatement*
- *Year #4: 40% real property abatement*
- *Year #5: 30% real property abatement*
- *Year #6: 20% real property abatement*
- *Year #7: 10% real property abatement*

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.

The mayor then called for a motion to move to contract. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Cowdell. There were no further questions or comments. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

Charlie Talmadge thanked the Board for this approval and welcome the partnership to develop the 894 Middle Street property.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the February 6, 2025 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Provenzano put forth the motion to approve the Minutes of the February 6, 2025 meeting. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor, and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

Commissioner Goldwasser put forth the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. This was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor, and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

C. BOF Transfer Request

Justin Malley advised the Board that the BOF Transfer item was not needed after all as the ECD staff had resolved the item internally.

D. Incentives Discussion

Justin Malley reported to the Board that a new business was seeking a grant for a space that had received a grant award under a previous business occupant. Discussion followed, including best practices with regards to grant payback time frames and the need to set project guidelines for any additional awarded funds. The Façade Grant remains an option in these cases as well.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

There was no New Business by Commissioners.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Goldwasser asked about the Pine Street encampment area. Mayor Caggiano advised he had spoken with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services which has a $58.5 million dollar grant for the purpose of assisting the unhoused population. The state is arranging for contracts with programs like Journey Home, but it will take some time before the impact is visible. The mayor also advised the Board that the city completed city property clean up work in that area.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. CDBG Policy Committee

The Board was advised that the CDBG Policy Committee Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 10th will be rescheduled. This is part due to HUD net yet releasing the amount of the funds that Bristol will be rewarded. Mayor Caggiano reminded the Board that the announcement of last year's funds was delayed a couple months as well.

Commissioner Provenzano updated the Board on the Public Hearing at which CDBG Grant applicants spoke regarding their applications and their programs, and answered questions from the CDBG Policy Committee. Commissioner Hick expressed concern about the growing elderly homeless population that many applicants reported to the Committee.

B. City Council Member Report

There was no City Council Member Report.

As a closing item, Justin Malley shared that 18 Main Street has been purchased by Max Kathari, owner of Express Kitchens. The location will be primarily distribution with manufacturing. There will also be a high-tech retail outlet, mainly for subcontractors. This purchase allows for the business to move their New Jersey operations to Bristol. There will be job opportunities with this purchase. Justin advised that Mr. Kathari is very community oriented.

X. Adjournment

The mayor called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:53pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary