

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 3, 2025 5:00pm

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

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Commissioner Schmelder, Council Member Dickau, Commissioner Goldwasser, Hick, and Kearney-Gonzales

ABSENT: Commissioner Mills, Provenzano, and Cowdell

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

GUESTS: Meg Close and Jack McGovern, The Michaels Organization (Zoom)

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano opened the meeting at 5:01pm, and led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the March 6, 2025 Regular Meeting

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from March 6, 2025. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Goldwasser seconded it. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda, and Commissioner Schmelder seconded it. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

A. 273 Riverside Ave. and Downtown Update

Justin Malley, along with Meg Close and Jack McGovern from The Michaels Organization, the city's developer of choice for 273 Riverside Avenue, discussed the State's suggestions for the mix of work force housing rates to be offered there. The State can provide more funding for the project if a small number of apartments are offered at 30% Area Median Income (AMI). The project is currently projected with a range of 50% to 80% AMI. Discussion followed including funding models, and next steps in the process.

Additional Downtown Updates were also provided, including interior improvements to the newly purchased Express Kitchens locations. Ventana's Restaurant on N. Main Street opened on Monday, March 31st to positive feedback. Monterey Mexican Restaurant signed their lease for space in the new Centre Square building on N. Main Street. The retail space at Centre Square is fully claimed now, and 95% of the apartments are rented.

A Route 72 Streetscape Public Hearing is scheduled for 7pm on April 29, 2025. Notification will be sent to building owners and businesses to make them aware. The Barnes Group offices remain in use until the end of the year, with high confidence in local businesses being interested in the space. Express Kitchens will be highlighting local manufacturing history in their new location. A well-known business outside the city is moving their offices and about thirty employees into the remaining space at 150 Main Street. This is the portion of the building not in use by Iron Horse Restaurant.

The Funck Building is under renovation by the Carrier Group, with attributes of interest, such as façade features, being discovered at the site, with plans to utilize them when it's viable for them to do so. Work continues at the site of the former Eagle Bank location.

B. 894 Middle St. and Industrial Update

Justin Malley presented slides showing various locations including Lots #10 and #11 - All State Trucking Company, Lot #2 - Horizon Stone, and Lot #3 - FORCE Automation. Lot #6 which has a new business interested in the space after the company the ECD Staff had been working with opted to end their inquiry due to their own budget constraints.

C. Forestville Update

Justin Malley presented additional slides focused on development in the Forestville section of Bristol. Locations and businesses discussed include the new BBQ & Bacon described as a pick up, commissary style location. 150 Central Street remains for sale, and a developer is interested in creating a new market rate apartment complex in another Forestville space.

A Brooklyn developer purchased property and welcomes the mix of existing tenants, from bands to artists and a printing company. The developer is embracing the area, telling ECD Staff how welcoming it was for them to do business in the city, and expressing appreciation to the mayor for being on site to speak with them.

Additional discussion around development in Forestville included a new Ecuadorian bakery, the Rumba Lounge and community parking area.

Justin Malley asked the Board to consider extending the Special Area Bonus within the city's Forgivable Revolving Loan Fund Guidelines to include Forestville. The bonus currently allows for the maximum loan amount to be raised by 25% for business in the Downtown Bristol area. Discussion followed.

In response, Mayor Caggiano proposed the following Motion:

To expand the existing Special Area Bonus within the Forgivable Revolving Loan Fund Guidelines to include the Forestville Village Center.

Commissioner Hick put the motion forward as presented. There were no additional comments or discussions. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion was accepted into the record.

The mayor noted that one of the major goals of the CIP Strategic Planning Commission is to discuss items like this, and that the Commission be made aware of the Forgivable Revolving Loan Fund option.

D. Manufacturer Visits

Justin Malley advised the Board that he is partnering with Katie D'Agostino from the Central CT Chambers of Commerce, and Kim Ward Holley from BristolWORKS! to complete in person check-in visits with Bristol manufacturers. The goal is to meet with one manufacturer a month to facilitate a more casual conversation than a ribbon-cutting or other special event allows for. A series of prepared inquiries meant to guide those conversations was provided with this meeting's agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser recommended sharing these business visits on the All Heart site, with the company's approval, as a series about the city investing in Bristol's existing manufacturing base.

E. CDBG Conflict of Interest Statement

Dr. Dawn Leger read the following Conflict of Interest Declaration for CDBG Year 51 as a matter of record:

Conflict of Interest Declaration for CDBG Year 51

April 3, 2025

In accordance with HUD regulations concerning Conflicts of Interest, there are two individuals who have submitted statements concerning Conflicts of Interest with an applicant for CDBG funding.

Councilwoman Susan Tyler presently serves on the Board of Directors of St. Vincent De Paul Mission, 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. She does not receive any remuneration for her service on the St. Vincent DePaul Board of Directors.

Justin Malley, Executive Director of the ECD, is a member of the Board of Directors of BristolWORKS! an applicant for CDBG funding. While Mr. Malley does not vote on the award of grant funds by the CDBG Policy Committee, he will be asked to recuse himself from the discussion of the BristolWorks! application. Mr. Malley does not receive any compensation for his service on the BristolWorks! Board.

With this public notice of a Conflict of Interest, the ECD has satisfied the requirements of HUD Regulations 24 CFR Ch. V, 570.611.

Dr. Leger advised the Board that the ECD Staff expects to be notified about Bristol's allocation for CDBG Year 51 in early May. With that in mind, the Policy Committee Meeting and the next Public Hearing have been rescheduled from April to May.

Justin Malley shared that in addition to CDBG, Dr. Leger worked on the grant for the parking garage. The city is owed \$5M in grant funding for it, and the paperwork was previously submitted.

Justin Malley asked the Board for guidance regarding an exception request for Dynamic Manufacturing who is applying for a Forgivable Revolving Loan. Dynamic Manufacturing has been in the location for thirty-two years, and in operation for almost fifty. Their loan would be used to purchase equipment, and requires them to have a seven-year lease for their space. The business leases five years at a time per the property owner's processes.

Discussion followed. The Board agreed that the company's history in Bristol, and Community Investment Corporation's confidence in awarding them the loan, were positive factors to allow for the exception.

Mayor Caggiano proposed the following Motion:

To grant a waiver for Dynamic Manufacturing allowing them to have a longer Forgivable Revolving Loan term than the term length of their lease.

The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser, and was seconded by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzales. There was no further discussion. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

Commissioners also agreed to review the program and make updates to avoid additional waiver requests. Commissioners also requested the news of these businesses developing and investing in Bristol be shared with the community.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Hick inquired about the new location of the Monterey Mexican Restaurant in the Centre Square building. The restaurant joins Dark Moon and Pure Foods in the new retail space.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

There was no Old Business by Commissioners.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. City Council Member Report

There was no City Council Member Report. Council Member Dickau expressed his appreciation at hearing about the positive activity in Forestville.

IX. Adjournment

Mayor Caggiano called for the meeting to be adjourned. Commissioner Hick made the motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:12pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary