

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 5:00pm

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

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

ABSENT: None

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

GUESTS: David Kooris, CT Municipal Development Authority (Zoom)
Jeremy Berube, owner of Luna's, LLC
Steve Shapiro, Developer of 37 Main Street/Mafales Plaza
Chris Maiorano, Allstate Trucking

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5:03pm and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Introductions of the ECD Staff and Board Members followed.

II. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to move Agenda Item **V. New Business A. CT Municipal Development Authority** up for discussion. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion to move up the discussion passed.

V. New Business A. CT Municipal Development Authority

David Kooris from the CT Municipal Development Authority (CMDA) spoke to the Board via Zoom regarding a proposed partnership between the city and the CMDA. The partnership is specific to a State of Connecticut statute designed to help cities and town develop their downtown areas and train stations, with a primary focus on housing, essentially development and redevelopment. CMDA provides technical and financial support for these initiatives. This includes a \$90M bond authorization from the State of Connecticut. The CMDA was established in July 2024 with the first applications for partnerships accepted in February 2025.

Mr. Kooris explained the progression of the process which includes confirmation of a municipality's interest in pursuing the partnership. Recommendations for development are provided to the local governing body for consideration. Other support includes grants for municipalities and low interest loans gap financing to developers for the designated area. Non-financial support includes linking cities with potential developers, and with state permitting assistance. Discussion followed.

Mayor Caggiano called for additional comments and questions. Hearing none, the mayor read the proposed motion as follows:

To recommend that the City Council schedule a Public Hearing to consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the CT Municipal Development Authority to assist in developing Bristol's downtown district.

The motion was made by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzales, and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to move Agenda Item **V. New Business C. Enterprise Zone Application – 37 Main St.** up for discussion. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion to move up the discussion passed.

V. New Business C. Enterprise Zone Application – 37 Main St.

Justin Malley introduced Steven Shapiro as the Developer of 37 Main Street/Mafales Plaza, a location that falls in the city's Enterprise Zone. Mr. Shapiro's plans for a mixed used building in this location meets the Enterprise Zone benefit requirements which he is requesting. Steven Shapiro clarified the proposed building is 3,000 square feet of commercial storefront and 28 market rate apartments.

Discussion followed including the availability of funding from the State of Connecticut to encourage housing development, especially recognizing the need for health care workers to have access to good, safe housing. Mr. Shapiro confirmed this will not be subsidized housing. Parking was also discussed. Justin Malley also clarified that the Enterprise Zone was created by the State with the city's input. It was designed to offer a tax benefit to development in the downtown area.

The mayor entertained a motion to waive the reading of the proposed motion as written with the correction to 28 units. The motion to waive the reading was made by Commissioner Hick and seconded by Commissioner Mills. All were in favor and the reading of the proposed motion was waived.

For the record, the proposed motion with the correction to 28 units is as follows:

Whereas, the property known as 37 Main Street is located within the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone established by the City of Bristol and State of Connecticut;

Whereas, 37 Main Street Bristol LLC has purchased 37 Main Street with the intention of converting the vacant land to a mixed-use development featuring approximately 2,909 square feet of retail/office/commercial space and approximately 28 apartments;

Whereas, per Article XIV, Section 18-201, of the City of Bristol Code of Ordinances, assessments on commercial real property within the Enterprise Zone which is improved to the extent of \$175,000 or the complete renovation of the building(s) facade, whichever is less, are eligible to be fixed for a period of seven (7) years from the time of such improvement and shall defer any increase in assessment attributable to such improvements according to the following schedule: Year 1 (100% deferral), Year 2 (100% deferral), Year 3 (50% deferral), Year 4 (40% deferral), Year 5 (30% deferral), Year 6 (20% deferral), Year 7 (10% deferral).

In addition, per Article XIV, Section 18-203(g) any owner of real property who agrees to rehabilitate such property or construct new multi-family rented housing or cooperative housing on such property located in the rehabilitation area herein designated may, in accordance with provisions of Section 12-65e of General Statutes, make application to the City for an agreement to fix the assessment on the property, during the period not to exceed three (3) years of rehabilitation or construction and for a deferral of any increase in assessment attributable to such rehabilitation or construction.

I hereby make a motion: Under the guidelines of Article XIV of the City of Bristol Code of Ordinances, and pending conversion of the subject property to a mixed-use building featuring approximately 2,909 square feet of ground floor commercial space and approximately 28 apartments units, to approve the following Enterprise Zone tax abatement schedule for the property known as 37 Main Street:

Construction Year #1 (period to begin immediately following the receipt of appropriate construction permits for the approved project): 100% real property abatement

Construction Year #2: (if required) 100% real property abatement

Construction Year #3: (if required) 100% real property abatement

Year #1 (period to begin following issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the approved mixed-use project encompassing the subject property of this motion): 100% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

Year #2: 100% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

Year #3: 50% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

Year #4: 40% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

Year #5: 30% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

Year #6: 20% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

Year #7: 10% real property abatement attributable to property improvements

The mayor then called for a motion to approve the Enterprise Zone application for 37 Main Street. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve, and it was seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to move Agenda Item **VIII. Committee Reports B. Industrial Committee Report** up for discussion. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Cowdell. All were in favor and the motion to move up the discussion passed.

VIII. Committee Reports B. Industrial Committee Report

Chris Maiorano from Allstate Trucking in Seymour and Meriden, CT spoke to the Board regarding the planned move of their Meriden location to the Southeast Bristol Business Park (SEBBP) Lots #10 and #11. The business needs more space which will be shared between classroom and driver training. They plan to lease out the remaining space. Discussion followed including employment, both at their business and to meet the nationwide demand for CDL drivers. Justin Malley confirmed the project meets the industrial park guidelines, and the motions speak specifically in regard to certain items.

Mayor Caggiano advised that the full reading of the following five motions were unanimously approved at the Industrial Committee Meeting prior to the ECD Board Meeting, and suggested the reading of them be waived in the interest of time. Each member had a copy of the proposed motions, and the mayor ensured that each motion would be clarified so that all the board members understood what was being voted on.

The motion to waive the reading of the first proposed motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All were in favor and the full reading of the proposed motion was waived.

The first motion will allow Allstate Trucking to build the building they would like with the square footage that they have.

Proposed Motion #1

Motion to waive the minimum building coverage requirement of 20% as indicated in Section 3.16.2 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park Design Guidelines and Regulations Amended Dec. 9, 2024 for the site plan/building plan dated May 27, 2025 titled "Proposed Commercial Driving Training School" representing the new construction project for Allstate Commercial Driver Training School on Lot #10 and Lot #11 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park, as the lot's significant percentage of wetlands limits the total buildable square footage, which is considered an "extraordinary circumstance" per the Guidelines.

Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

Mayor Caggiano reviewed the second proposed motion regarding the use of millings on site to cover the area used for driver training. The millings won't be completely impervious and will be contained within the area. A motion to waive the reading of the second motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the full reading of the proposed motion was waived.

Proposed Motion #2

Motion to allow the use of millings as a material on the site plan/building plan dated May 27, 2025 titled "Proposed Commercial Driving Training School" representing the new construction project for Allstate Commercial Driver Training School on Lot #10 and Lot #11 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park under the following conditions:

- 1. The millings area as represented on the site plan may only be utilized as an area for driver training purposes and must not be used as a loading area/parking area.*
- 2. The millings area as represented on the site plan must be framed by appropriate curbing or similar infrastructure to ensure the millings are contained and cannot migrate from the designated driver training area.*

Additional discussion was held around the millings being compacted and framed in with curbing to prevent the millings from spreading into travel lanes. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

The mayor called for a motion to waive the reading of proposed motion #3 was made by Commissioner Hick and seconded by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzales and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the reading of the motion was waived.

The third proposed motion spoke to the need for all tenants that Allstate brings to the site to be recorded with the city, and that the tenants would follow the SEBBP guidelines.

Proposed Motion #3

Motion that future tenants other than Allstate Commercial Driver Training School occupying the structure as identified on the site plan/building plan dated May 27, 2025 titled "Proposed Commercial Driving Training School" seek approval by ECD staff, who will report to the ECD Board, to ensure alignment with the Southeast Bristol Business Park Design Guidelines and Regulations.

Commissioner Schmelder made the motion to approve, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Mills. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

The mayor called to waive the reading of the proposed motion #4. The motion was made by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzales and seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the reading of the motion was waived.

Proposed Motion #4

Motion that final landscaping, signage, and similar amenities not clearly indicated on the site plan/building plan dated May 27, 2025 titled "Proposed Commercial Driving Training School" be approved by the ECD Director and reported to the ECD board. In the event of a conflict on final landscaping, signage and similar amenities with said Guidelines, ECD staff will work with the applicant on proposed solutions, which must be reported and, in certain circumstances, approved by the ECD Board.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to approve the proposed motion #4. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

The mayor called for the reading of the proposed motion #5 to be waived. The motion was made by Commissioner Hick and seconded by Commissioner Provenzano. All were in favor and the reading of the motion was waived.

Mayor Caggiano advised on the final proposed motion that indicates Allstate will need to get approval by the Economic and Community Development Board as well as all associated site and building approvals and take all the necessary steps for the building process.

Proposed Motion #5

Motion to approve the site plan and building elevation plan dated May 27, 2025 titled "Proposed Commercial Driving Training School" representing the new construction project for Allstate Commercial Driver Training School on Lot 10/Lot 11 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park that includes construction of an approximately 12,000 square foot building and associated parking/loading/driver training areas. Note that approximately 3,850 square feet of the building will be utilized by Allstate Commercial Driver Training School and 8,150 square feet will be available for lease to a tenant(s) deemed appropriate per the Southeast Bristol Business Park Design Guidelines and Regulations Amended Dec. 9, 2024. This approval is from the Economic and Community Development Board only, as the coordinator of development of the Southeast Bristol Business Park. The applicant must obtain all necessary approvals from Zoning, Wetlands, and/or other applicable boards and commissions, which are made independently of the ECD Board.

Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve. It was seconded by Commissioner Cowdell. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to move Agenda Item **V. New Business B. Facade Grant - 164 Central St.** up for discussion. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor, and the Motion to move up the discussion passed.

V. New Business B. Facade Grant - 164 Central St.

Jeremy Berube, owner of Luna's, LLC spoke to the Board regarding his application for a Façade Grant at 164 Central Street, in Forestville. This is the site of the former Nuchies restaurant. Luna's has outgrown the current site on King Street in Bristol which required the move, and renovations in the Forestville locations are in progress. Discussion followed including seating plans and parking. Mr. Berube also plans to honor the area's history with iconic photos on display inside the new location. It is expected to open within three to four months. Plans for the previous Luna's location and property are not yet decided.

The mayor called for a motion to accept the report into the record. The motion was made by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzales and seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the report was accepted into the record.

At this time the meeting returned to the original Agenda order.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the May 1, 2025 Regular Meeting

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 1, 2025 Regular Meeting. The motion was made by Commissioner Schmelder and seconded by Commissioner Mills. There were no changes or edits noted. 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 Minutes of the May 1, 2025 Regular Meeting. The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

D. Strategic Planning Update

Mayor Caggiano and Justin Malley provided information on a the first CIP Strategic Planning Committee meeting scheduled for July 22, 2025, with Chairs and Vice Chairs from ECD, Planning and Zoning, and Finance as major groups present. The goal is to identify key challenges, a mission statement, and other details. A workshop will follow August 26, 2025 and will be open to larger groups, with additional meetings in September 2025 ahead of the next budget planning season. The goal is to document the city's Strategic Plan, and to use existing talent within the city to avoid contracting with an outside vendor for the process.

E. Board of Finance Transfer Request

Commissioner Hick read the following motion for the Board of Finance Transfer Request:

To transfer \$650 from account 1044103-557700-G2025 to account 1044103-531000-G2025 for Fair Housing expenses related to staff training for St. Vincent DePaul Mission.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

F. Incentives Discussion

Justin Malley spoke about a manufacturer based in Forestville moving to the Gaski Building on Broad Street. They've been in business for 24 year and their main move cost is to move a lot of heavy, expensive equipment from a second floor down the street to their new location. The rigging cost is between \$30,000 to \$40,000. They're looking at the Revolving Loan Program or the funds, and this specific use is outside the guidelines. The request is for the Board to approve this as an acceptable type of expense for the loan.

There was no discussion except for comments that this should be allowed. The mayor called for the motion which was made by Commissioner Mills. It was seconded by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzales. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Mayor Caggiano advised of talks regarding rewriting zoning regulations to consider, by special permit, that new development not be required to have retail space on the first floor. The current zoning regulations require some streets like North Main Street, South Street, and Main Street to have first floor retail space. There are some developers interested in creating first floor living spaces, and the consideration would be if it would be allowed through special permitting, with retail remaining as the preferred use. Discussion followed, noting this isn't an ECD Board decision, but members should be

aware of the conversation. Concerns about saturation, the need for restaurants and keeping with the overall look and feel of downtown were also expressed.

There was no other New Business by Commissioners.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

There was no Old Business by Commissioners.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. CDBG Policy Committee Report

Dr. Dawn Leger advised the Board that the CDBG Policy Committee had a meeting after the allocation from HUD came in for this year. Due to the decreased amount awarded to the city, it was decided not to fund any public service applications at this time. The list of awards was provided to the Board ahead of this meeting. The Board also needed to vote on the five-year comprehensive plan that will be submitted to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Mayor Caggiano noted that it was a real possibility the funds wouldn't have been awarded this year, and Dr. Leger advised the funds could still be rescinded. With these awards approved, the funds allocated to the city can be designated to the grantees.

The mayor read the proposed motion as follows:

To approve the CDBG Consolidated 5-Year Plan for 2025-2029 and Annual Action Plan for 2025-26 for the City of Bristol as recommended by the CDBG Policy Committee, and to refer this recommendation to the City Council and Board of Finance for action.

Commissioner Cowdell made the motion to approve, and it was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

B. City Council Member Report

There was no City Council Member Report.

IX. Adjournment

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion which was seconded by Commissioner Hick and the meeting adjourned at 6:25pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary