

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting
Thursday October 6, 2022 5:00pm
City Hall West Meeting Room 1 – 111 North Main St.

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller, Hick and 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: Larry Covino, Bristol Adult Ed

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano began the meeting at 5:00PM and led the room in The Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

Mayor Caggiano invited members of the public to address the Board and no one requested to speak.

III. Minutes – August 4, 2022

Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to accept the Minutes from the meeting of September 1, 2022. Commissioner Goldwasser noted a correction for the acceptance of the Consent Agenda. The Minutes indicate he made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda and he wasn't present at the meeting. Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to accept the Minutes as amended by removing that it was Commissioner Goldwasser who made the motion. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to accept the amended Minutes into record. Commissioner Schmelder seconded. All members voted in favor and the minutes were accepted into record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development Grants/Marketing Report

Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to file and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All members voted in favor and the report was accepted into record.

V. New Business

A. Grant Award Policies

Justin Malley reported on two recent grant requests that fit the Small Business Grant criteria except that they're startups in business for less than a year. These are 10 Main Coffee Shop and an almost completed Italian market on Farmington Avenue. Both spots have been elevated by these businesses. Discussion included the definition of a startup, the scope and changes of the Grant Award Policies, and the approval process, including the division of business and City investments. Mayor Caggiano asked for, and Justin Malley provided, an overview of the StartUP Bristol task force. The Board suggested this Grant Award Policy item might be best addressed through the StartUP Bristol task force versus the ECD. Justin will speak with StartUP Bristol and Mayor Caggiano noted the general consensus of the Board is to help new businesses like this and be consistent with the process.

Justin Malley advised that Bristol Truck Tire, a former Sessions building tenant, has asked for \$5,000 in financial assistance for tire removal to vacate the property. If approved, it would be a one off. Discussion included the expected final outcome of the building, dumpsters previously provided to vacating tenants, Bristol Truck Tire's twenty-five years in the City and them staying in town. Justin proposed a motion allowing ECD staff to use a Small Business Grant maxed out at \$5,000 to help businesses with costs associated with moving from the Sessions building. Commissioner Schmelder amended the motion to 75% of the maximum grant amount with an invoice showing evidence of the payments made. Council Member Sebastian seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the motion was accepted.

Justin Malley revisited Commissioner Schmedler's item to adjust at what time Executive Sessions are held with the suggestion made to move them to the middle of the Agenda based on what makes the most sense for staff and guest time consideration. Commissioner Goldwasser suggested putting a time limit on the Executive Session discussions as well.

B. Downtown Update

Mayor Caggiano shared the most recent Downtown Development video highlighting The Wheeler Health Clinic groundbreaking.

Justin Malley addressed Carrier Village at Center Square, specifically parking and the bus stops currently at McDonalds and outside the Post Office. The City and CT Transit are working on a plan to relocate bus activity to The Wheeler Clinic's new location and a spot near where Better Half Brewing was to avoid buses double stacking at the stops. Discussion includes the State's partnership which is positive, the appearance of the new stops, and other logistics.

Carrier Group continues to pursue the Funck & Eagle building purchase working within the tax abatement guidelines.

Commissioner Schmelder asked about Summer Street. Justin Malley advised that the current owner remains compliant with city guidelines.

On October 20th, KindCare will have a ribbon cutting at their leasing office. The office has a sample living space for viewing.

C. BristolWORKS! Update

Guest Larry Covino from Bristol Adult Ed presented the BristolWORKS! Workforce Development Program plan designed to serve the underemployed and unemployed in Bristol and surrounding areas. The program offers work placement degrees, employability skills and training, and a pathway to certification, and is funded by a \$2.4 million dollar ARPA grant. Community partnerships are being formed with regular meetings of both the Advisory and Executive Boards. Programs offered include Child Development, IT Development, Manufacturing Development, which is opening first, and Health Occupations Development. The 501c3 has been granted, construction has begun, and the first draw down of funds has been made. They're conducting an active search for a Director. Posting for an Administrative Assistance and an Employability Skills instructor will follow. This site is to the right of Tunxis. Tunxis and American Job Center will be student resources. Commissioner Goldwasser commented that this is a transformational item which is what they wanted to see the ARPA Funds provide.

D. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

Mayor Caggiano introduced Commissioner Verikas to present the Bristol Bazaar plan, also funded by ARPA. The Bristol Bazaar is a 5,800 sq. foot indoor maker's market located downtown on Ray Street. It will support up to 40 artisans, those making anything with their hands. A coffee cocktail lounge, and a space for events and classes will be open to the public to rent and for artisans to use for meetings and presentations. Commissioner Goldwasser mentioned the recent WFSB News Coverage on the bazaar. Discussion included marketing, artisan applications, access to a Think Tank space, and organized business growth and networking offerings. Food will be available through a café along with local businesses. A groundbreaking get together is planned.

Mayor Caggiano advised that the Building Bristol Grants are actively in process now too.

E. J. H. Sessions Building Update

Justin Malley reported approval was received to guarantee the cleanup grant and is working with the State to complete it. This change will eliminate the maintenance costs that have The City has carried.

F. Marketing Update

Dawn Nielsen reported on marketing involvement in a number of projects and activities within the City. This includes items already covered at this meeting.

The City will air a TV Commercial during the World Cup Games Thanksgiving through the holiday season on NBC CT. Springfield Spring & Stamping has partnered with The City to focus on the Spanish speaking community in regards to career opportunities in the manufacturing industry. This commercial will direct viewers to the BristolWORKS! Training program with manufacturing starting in January 2023. A five minute segment will also air on Acceso Total, a Hispanic TV program, to continue the message's momentum. The message will be broadcast in English at a later date.

The Farmer's Market ends October 29th. The annual Fall Festival is Saturday, November 19th. The 2022 Farmer's Market season was successful in the new location with the hope

to hold it there again due to the feedback from vendors and the public. There were live Facebook segments with the Mayor and a great partnership with the Rotarians who brought in some sponsorships.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Goldwasser highlighted the success of the Mum Festival and partnership with the City. Mayor Caggiano thanked the MUM festival organizers for bringing business and the large number of visitors to Downtown.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

There was no Old Business to address.

VIII. Any Other Business

A. City Council Member Report

Council Member Panioto congratulated NOVO Precision named in the Hartford Courant as a top work place for small business and the sole Bristol representation.

X. Adjournment

Mayor Caggiano requested a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mills. All members approved the motion and the meeting adjourned at 6:15PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary