

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY HALL
253 Main Street
Ansonia, Connecticut 06401
Telephone (203) 736-5930 FAX (203) 735-5422

Patrick Henri
Chairman
Sandro Epifano
Vice Chairman
Tracy Edwards
Secretary
Gregg Seccombe
Treasurer

Claude L. Perry, Sr.
Executive Director

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2010 ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS 6:30 PM

Mr. Epifano opened the regular meeting at 6:35.

The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Roll call:

Patrick Henri	Late 7:00
Sandro Epifano	present
James Hooker	present
William Luneski	present
Greg Seccombe	present
William Gallant	present
Tracy Edwards	absent
Terry Goldson	absent
Ralphine Siggars Ford	present

6 present, 2 absent

also present:

Claude Perry, Executive Director
John Marnini, Alderman

A quorum was present.

Mr. Epifano entertained a motion to accept the prior months minutes. Mr. Luneski made a motion to

approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gallant. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Epifano then entertained a motion to open the session to the public. Ms. Siggars Ford made a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hooker. All were in favor of the motion. Mr. Epifano then opened the meeting up to the public session.

Steve Blume, Board of Alderman President, stated that he has some concerns with the commission; however, he stated that you don't need a motion to go into Public Session. He then stated that the Chairman of the commission cannot make or second a motion. At the last meeting the newly elected chairman made and seconded motions after his election. The Secretary stated that she believed that Mr. Epifano was still the chairman at the time that these motions were made. Mr. Luneski stated that that was correct. Mr. Luneski stated that even though Mr. Henri was elected chairman, he did not take over being chairman at that time. It was the last order of business before the meeting was adjourned. Mr. Blume stated that it wasn't clear from the minutes and that there was other items he wished to address, but he would need to address them directly to the Chairman.

Mr. Epifano asked if there was anyone else from the public that wished to speak. There was no one else that wished to speak. He then closed the public session. Mr. Blume then stated that as President of the Board of Aldermen, he does not need to speak only in public session. He can speak whenever he wishes to.

Mr. Epifano then requested that the Executive Director for his report. Mr. Perry stated that there was a few pages in the members packet that comprised his report. He further stated that this is the same report that goes to the board of Aldermen. It is a summary of what his office has been engaged in for the past month. Mr. Perry stated that there is nothing that needs to be acted upon.

Mr. Epifano then asked if there was any correspondence. He was told that there were some pieces of correspondence, but that they may be classified as committee reports. Mr. Perry stated that the documents that the board has are working documents and they can be discussed with the committee reports.

Mr. Epifano moved on to unfinished business, approval of Business Survey and letter. Mr. Luneski led the discussion regarding the business survey and letter. He discussed that they were trying to condense the survey, make it more readable and more appropriate to our community. Mr. Luneski asked Mr. Perry if the data, once it was received, would be in a usable format for his purposes. Mr. Perry stated that they did an extensive survey with UI and it wasn't as extensive as what the board was now looking at. A firm was called in to be able to convert the data into a usable format. The department does not have something like that in house. Once the material is gathered, the department can attempt to get a college or university to convert the data for them.

Mr. Henri joined the meeting at this point. He asked if the time of the meeting had been changed. He

was told that it had been.

Mr. Epifano informed the Chairman that the board was just reviewing the Business survey.

Mr. Henri took over the meeting and asked Mr. Perry for an update regarding the TIF incentive program. Mr. Perry has been meeting with Mr. Epifano. Mr. Perry stated that they have some information that came from the Harbor Point Project in Stamford. The bottom line on the TIF is that if the city is not planning a project that is a minimum of five million dollars, it would not work. It is too much to package it. It is also mainly involving retail and shopping centers. The people Mr. Perry spoke to indicated to him that it would not be worth it to pursue the TIF's. Others have done this but they have used a professional firm to help them to do this. Mr. Henri then asked if a small business wanted to come into Ansonia, would the city be able to have an internal TIF program? Mr. Perry stated that would be considered bonding. Mr. Henri questioned what TIF stood for. Mr. Perry stated that it stands for "Tax Increment Financing". He explained that this is bonding. If it's not big, it's not worth it. "The amount of money costs to get the expertise, the return on it has to be at a point where your taxes are worth it." Mr. Luneski stated that as he was doing research, he found it very difficult to get timely information. The information that he was looking at from the state, Connecticut Development Authority, was custom tailored the offers now to each of the larger firms coming in. "It's not a one shoe fits all type of thing." Mr. Perry stated that he serves as the municipal liaison for the program. He stated that he does the certification. He works with the assessors office. He further stated that they are already engaged in doing this. Mr. Henri stated that it looks like the Enterprise Corridor should be on the website. Mr. Perry stated that it had been on the website. He's not sure if it's still on there or not as he no longer maintains the website.

Mr. Henri then asked about suggestions for revisions to the website. Alderman Marini stated that Rich Bshara was not able to attend the meeting tonight. However, Eileen Krugel who maintains the web site was here to discuss any changes or modifications that the board saw fit. They suggested that she link the commission and the Department of Economic Development; add this information to the Doing Business page. Also she should add the demographic information to the Doing Business page and indicate what incentives are available via the Enterprise Corridor Zone.

Mr. Blume requested to speak at this time. Mr. Henri allowed him to do so. Mr. Blume stated that at the previous months meeting he had made a motion and seconded a motion after he was elected chairman. He further stated that as chairman he is not allowed to make or second motions. Mr. Henri stated that he was chairman for maybe five minutes, but thanked him for pointing that out. Mr. Blume added that he wanted to point out that Ms. Krugel was on vacation today and yet is here at the meeting. He stated that she does a great job for the city.

Mr. Luneski indicated that he didn't believe that the commission reviewed the cover letter for the survey. Mr. Luneski made a motion to deviate from the agenda to review the cover letter for the survey. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hooker. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Henri asked if anyone has any corrections to the cover letter. His only comment was that he felt that Mr. Luneski should sign the letter. Mr. Gallant said that he felt that Mr. Henri as the chairman of the commission should sign it. He then stated that he felt that Mr. Perry should also sign the letter as he is the most recognizable name in the city when it comes to Economic Development. The board had a very long discussion regarding all of the corrections that were to be made on this letter. The corrections that the board agreed to are: putting “Patrick Henri, Chairman” and “Claude Perry, Executive Director Economic Development” as signatures at the bottom of the letter. With regards to the letterhead, there should be “Ansonia, CT”, “Economic Development Commission”. It should also say “City of Ansonia” above or below that. Alderman Marini suggested that the commission create their own letterhead. Mr. Hooker suggested that we have the Anson Phelps logo (City Seal) and the Library on the letterhead. The members suggested that they remove the fax number from the letterhead. They then suggested that the website be added to the letterhead.

Mr. Luneski made a motion to continue to work on the letterhead and the survey for a near final draft for the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Siggars Ford. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Henri then went on to the approval of letters of recognition. Mr. Luneski passed out a sample letter for Mr. Jerry Noscerano. Mr. Henri asked what this letter was to be used for and who should be sending them out. He was told that it would be sent possibly to the newspaper. He suggested that we could give them a certificate. Ms. Siggars Ford stated that it would be more like a citation. Alderman Marini stated that this letter could actually be the citation, with the Mayor’s signature, and possibly that of the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Henri asked if this Board should send the letters out, or should this board make recommendations to the Board of Aldermen? Mr. Perry asked what the criteria would be for someone to obtain one of these letters. Mr. Henri stated that his original thought was that we start with the businesses that have been pillars of society and the community and businesses that have been here forever. Mr. Seccombe added that as long as the criteria were written down, then you could pick and choose as long as they meet those standards. Mr. Henri added that we also need to look at the frequency. Should it be monthly? Mr. Seccombe suggested that it be annually. Mr. Gallant stated that he didn’t feel that we could find enough businesses to do this more than annually. He then stated that we need to look at our mission statement. This should be what we base the criteria for this on. Ms. Siggars Ford stated that this could be awarded to more than one business as well. Alderman Marini stated that we may have categories such as one person businesses, medium sized, etc. The only problem that we may have is being accused of favoritism. Instead of size we could make the categories be based on the type of business, such as banks, fast food places, big box places, etc. Mr. Seccombe stated that they should pick a time of the year that we would give this out. A few months prior to this, do the preparation for selecting the recipients. Mr. Perry suggested that all of the information be submitted to his office and he will forward all of it to the other board members. Doing this should eliminate the need for extremely long meetings.

Mr. Luneski made a motion to continue looking at the letters of recognition for the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Siggars Ford. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Henri stated that he reached out to other Economic Development organizations in the city. He put a call in to Main Street Development and to Ansonia Development. The phone number that he had for Ansonia Development is not a working one for them. A representative from Main Street Development called him back. Kevin McDuffy stated that he would be happy to address the Commission whenever we would like him to come.

Under New Business is solicitation of new businesses. Mr. Perry stated that the Vice-Chair of Ansonia Development Corporation is the mayor. Ray McGee is the Chairman. Mr. Henri stated that we have to start reaching out and soliciting new businesses. He sees that there are a lot of new businesses that are moving into Connecticut and he wonders why they are not moving into Ansonia. He would like to contact them and find out why they didn't choose Ansonia. He further stated that he would like to actually contact these businesses. Mr. Perry stated that he does have a document that gives much of the information that the chairman is looking for. However, it is not for publication. Mr. Henri then questioned if there was a business that he contacted directly, he would have to go over to Mr. Perry's office for details. Mr. Henri then asked if it would be okay with Mr. Perry if he made initial contact with these businesses. Mr. Perry indicated that it would be fine with him. Mr. Gallant suggested that we attend Trade Shows as well. Mr. Perry stated that we used to attend Trade Shows, but we didn't have enough money to pay the secretary. There was a long discussion about other ways to solicit businesses and events that could benefit the city. However, there was a question regarding funding to investigate other ways to bring businesses into the city. Economic Development receives very little funds at all.

Mr. Henri went on to the next item on the agenda. It was outreach to the other boards and commissions. He stated that he has been to the Board of Aldermen, BOAT and the Cultural Commission. He introduced himself to the boards and indicated that the board wants to work with them and bring more businesses into Ansonia.

At the Cultural Commission he brought up having a bike rally to celebrate Pierre Lallement, from Ansonia, CT who held the first bicycle patent. The Cultural Commission loves the idea. They have someone available that organizes these bike rallies. The Historical Society loves the idea as well. It would be a good way to bring in monies into the city. The schools could get involved with this as well. Mr. Epifano asked who was going to clean up after this event. He was told that those details needed to be discussed at a later date. Mr. Henri stated that this is something that would bring positive attention to Ansonia.

Mr. Epifano stated that according to the schedule the next meeting is scheduled for December 7th. He further stated that he and Mr. Hooker would not be at the meeting as they have a prior commitment.

Mr. Epifano made a motion to move the date of the next meeting to December 6th at 7:00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gallant. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Epifano made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gallant. All were in favor of the motion.

The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Sardinha
Secretary