

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

Vincent Scarlata
Chairman
Sandro "Vito" Epifano
Vice Chairman
Ralphine Siggars Ford
Secretary
Gregg Seccombe
Treasurer

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2012 ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS 7:00 PM

The Economic Development Commission held its Regular monthly meeting on Thursday, February 16, 2012. The meeting began at 7:00 P.M.

Roll call:

Vincent Scarlata	present
James Hooker	absent
William Gallant	absent
Greg Seccombe	present
Ralphine Siggars Ford	absent
Terri Goldson	present
Sandro Epifano	absent
Sal Hanaif	present
Daniel Bogen	present

5 present, 4 absent

also present:

Tara Kolakowski

Mr. Scarlata declared the meeting open at 7:00. The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag. A quorum was present.

Mr. Scarlotta opened the meeting to the public. Alderman Marini congratulated the board for the successful Ansonia Small Business Forum meeting last month. He then stated that one of the most important items that the Board needs to focus on is the selection of a new Economic Development Director. He then added another is to act upon some of the suggestions that grew out of the Small Business Forum meeting. He and

Mr. Scarlotta created a pamphlet that highlights some of the suggestions entitled “Ideas! For Ansonia”. This list is a work in progress. We are trying to identify what ideas the business owners are putting out there.

One of the issues that the business owners would like to have addressed is the esthetics of Main Street and improvements. In addition, they are concerned about the empty storefronts and the need to bring in more businesses. They would like to have grants for storefront improvements. He then stated that there is a large amount of funds in the salary for the director of Economic Development. They would like to use some of these funds to cover the costs for the improvements as well as a few other ideas. One of the ideas is to have a grant to fund some of these projects with monies that would be repaid by the business owners at a later date. Since this grant would be handled by the City, they can dictate how the funds are awarded. However, they need to request a line item transfer from salaries into a line item that they can take from and use for a variety of projects. He then stated that this should be done as soon as possible and the Board should have specific projects that they can suggest that the funds will be used for.

Mr. Scarlotta then introduced some guests that he invited to speak to the Board.

Joe and Louise Herbert, 16 Broad Street, Milford, they stated that they are consultants for Downtown Milford that were involved in the revitalization of downtown Milford. They have been very active with the local Chamber of Commerce and have spearheaded a number of successful events that bring people into the downtown area. Some of these events are: the Milford Wine Trail, Open Doors of Milford, Pirate Festival, Lamplight Stroll to name a few. He stated that they are not looking to be paid for the information that they would give to the board, they are just looking to help us out.

Mr. Scarlotta invited the Herberts to the next Small Business Forum meeting which will be held on February 20th at Antonio’s. They stated that they are planning on attending.

Mr. Secombe invited Mr. Keith Murray to speak. He informed the board that they are requesting that Mr. Murray be appointed to this board.

Keith Murray, 117 Main Street, Ansonia, stated that he is looking forward to becoming a member of the board in the near future. Mr. Scarlotta then informed the board that Mr. Gallant did not wish to continue as a member of the board when his term expired. So, there is a vacancy.

There was no one else that wished to speak. Mr. Scarlotta closed the public session.

Mr. Secombe made a motion to approve the January minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hanaif. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Scarlotta then moved on to old business. He stated that he and Mr. Luneski are trying to find someone to actually draft up a professional website for the Commission. They don’t know what the cost will be at

this time. Alderman Marini stated that they looked at the Newtown Economic Development web site. He stated that was the best of all the websites that they saw. The cost for that site was around \$15,000. He stated that from what he can gather, this is the average cost for creating websites. He then stated that some of the local students are going to be photographing the storefronts on Main Street. One of the things that will be included on the website is a listing of available spaces. There will also be an inventory of sorts of all the businesses that operate in the city, similar to a yellow pages. Mr. Hanaif would like to be part of the website development team. Mr. Murray stated that his brother does this kind of work and maybe able to help the Commission with this project. Mr. Scarlotta stated that we are going to do more research and get back to the board at the next meeting.

Mr. Scarlotta then addressed the Bike Rally. He stated that its moving forward quickly. He is looking at making this event much bigger than it was last year. He is working with the Cultural Commission to see what they can do to promote this event. Judy Nicolari has requested that there be a liaison from Economic Development Commission to the Cultural Commission. Mr. Hanaif and Mr. Scarlotta offered to handle this duty.

Mr. Scarlotta asked Mr. Hanaif to speak about the Armory. Mr. Hanaif stated that he recently went on a walkthrough of the building. He found it to be a “goldmine” of opportunity. It has a lot of potential for a Community place. They are working out the details. Mr. Scarlotta then added that ESPN was going to be in town the following day. They were going to be looking at the Copper and Brass building. They are planning on possibly shoot a commercial. They have expressed a renewed interest in using the Armory in the future. We did have a movie filmed inside the Armory about a year ago entitled, “Another American : Asking and Telling”, (only available on YouTube). It is a one-man show about the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell military ban. When one of these companies is interested in filming in and around Ansonia, we are able to charge a location fee.

Moving on to the Economic Development Director’s position, Mr. Scarlotta stated that he met with the Mayor regarding this issue. The mayor has a group already together to put together a selection committee for this position. The committee to put together the selection committee consists of Mr. Scarlotta, Ms. Kolakowski, Mr. Bart Flaherty, Mr. James Tanner, Alderman Marini with the help of Jim Ryan, of Shelton. They are looking at how the Director will be working for the Commission. He then stated that the members would all be a part of this process. Mr. Hanaif offered to be a member of this committee. The thought is to hire someone for a short time as a per diem and see how they do. If they perform well, then they can hire the person full time. We do not need any more studies to be done because we have a multitude of them at this time. We need to take action on what has been done already.

Moving on to the Budget. Mr. Scarlotta stated that we have \$78,659.93 remaining in the line item for the salary of the Executive Director. The suggestion is to request that those funds be moved into the general operating budget. Mr. Goldson made a motion to request that the Board of Taxation move \$50,000 into a new line item for grants to assist storeowners in storefront beautification, and the remaining \$28,659.93 into the operating expense line item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bogan. All of the members were in

favor of the motion.

Mr. Scarlotta then informed the members that his son purchased a domain for the use of Economic Development as a gift. It gives any of the board members that would like a new e-mail address. The domain is AnsoniaEDC.org. Mr. Scarlotta will give the e-mail addresses to those who wish them by the next meeting.

There was no further business to come before the board.

Mr. Scarlotta entertained a motion for adjournment. Mr. Seccombe made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goldson.

The meeting ended at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Sardinha
Secretary