

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
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## MINUTES

### **WORKSHOP, THURSDAY, October 18, 2012 ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS 7:00 PM**

The Economic Development Commission held a Workshop on Thursday, October 18, 2012. The meeting began at 7:10 P.M.

Roll call:

Vincent Scarlata	present
Greg Seccombe	absent
Daniel Bogen	present
Terri Goldson	present
Sal Hanaif	absent
Dave Cassetti	present
Keith Murray	absent
Horace Behrle	absent
Bart Flaherty	present

5 present, 4 absent

Also present: Alderman Joan Radin  
Alderman Charles Stowe

Mr. Scarlata declared the meeting open at 7:10. The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag. A quorum was present.

Mr. Scarlata asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. Alderman Radin stated that she wished to speak.

Alderman Radin stated that she was reviewing the contract between Bartram and Cochran and the City of Ansonia and she feels that there is a word missing on numbers 11 and 12. In #11, it says,

“The Consultant agrees to hold the City of Ansonia, its employees, agents, representatives with respect to the services the Consultant provides pursuant to this Agreement.” What is the Consultant agreeing to hold? Hold harmless or holding them responsible? It doesn’t say. In #12, the wording is strange. It says, “The Consultant agrees to provide abide to the request for services as set forth... She says that the wording “to provide abide” doesn’t make sense and needs to be reviewed. She stated that she already spoke to the Mayor and Tara and they both said that its fine the way it is. Mr. Scarlata stated that he would take care of it himself.

There was no one else that wished to speak from the public. Mr. Scarlata then closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. Scarlata stated that there were no communications for the Board.

Mr. Scarlata moved to discuss old business. The EDC Grant program is the result of the Main Street Investment Fund Project that the Commission just applied for. He stated that it is currently in the hands of OPM. Peter Burns and Eileen Krugel developed this program. The results will be announced in December. Mr. Scarlata stated that he spoke to the administer for OPM and was told that they received 60 applications from around the state. There were 130 cities that qualified but only 60 applications were submitted. Of that between 10 and 12 will be awarded. The application was crafted for West Main Street. These are plans that we’ve had for a long time. There was only 60 days to complete the application and apply for it. The premise was to have a program that had been already in place that had already been worked up, in order to apply. They took the back half of the greenway plan. West Main Street parking lot was a section of a 10-phase plan for the Riverwalk. This part was eliminated due to budget constraints. Luckily, it was enough to use for this grant program. It would be about \$500, 000. They would like to carve up the parking lot, put in sidewalks, plant a tree row, add a brick walkway. He then stated that they included copies of the City Center Plan, CT Main Street Center Walking Tour and the Conservation and Development Plan.

Mr. Scarlata then discussed the Incentive Plan. He stated that the members just have a draft of the proposed TIF plan. He further explained that Alderman Marini and Bill Nimons worked on this using some of the guidelines from some of the surrounding towns. He would like the members to review it and make any suggestions that they feel may improve it. He would like it to be completed so that Alderman Marini can present it to the Board of Alderman and get their approval.

Mr. Scarlata then stated that the other document regarding the Store Front Improvement Plan is also up for discussion. He asked if there was any one that had any suggestions for either of the two programs. If there are, we can forward the suggestions to Alderman Marini so that he can include them. Mr. Flaherty asked for a few clarifications. The first for the Tax Incentive Program was “storage, warehouse or distribution use”, “Permanent Residential Uses” and “Transient Residential Uses.” What exactly does this mean? Hotels? Motels? Or what? Mr. Scarlata stated that it might

be rental units as opposed to condo or place of your own. Mr. Flaherty then asked if “Permanent Residential Use” would be a homeowner. He was told that he believes that is what was meant. Mr. Scarlata further explained that “Transient Residential Use” would be rental units. Mr. Flaherty then asked if someone wanted to build a garage to improve their property, it would qualify for the tax incentive program. Mr. Flaherty then stated that he feels that someone would have to spend at least \$25,000. So if somebody were to side their house, and build a garage, would that qualify? He was told that it would not qualify. Mr. Flaherty then stated if you increased the assessed value of personal property of \$25,000, if you added a garage, would that qualify? He would like an example of what would qualify. He doesn’t know what “Permanent Residential Use” would mean. Does that mean if you build a house in Ansonia, would that qualify? He is wondering why we are incentivizing “Permanent Residential Use.” He would like to know who and what is eligible for that “Permanent Residential Use.” Mr. Cassetti asked what “Transient Residential Use” is? Mr. Flaherty stated that is exactly what he is talking about. Mr. Goldson reiterated Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Cassetti’s points shouldn’t this be more geared to businesses rather than homeowners or a business that wants to build homes? Mr. Scarlata thinks that maybe he was thinking of businesses on the bottom and residential on the top, similar to the set up on Main Street. Mr. Flaherty stated that is what the question is. Mr. Goldson then stated if we wanted to do housing, you would have to do something different than this and separate from this. He further explained that you have to be careful when you add housing. Mr. Goldson then asked what is “Waterfront Development, What is meant by that?” Mr. Flaherty then suggested that Alderman Marini may be able to explain these items for the Commission. He then stated that this has been submitted to the Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen for review. He suggested that they hold off on doing that until the team of Bartram and Cochran to see what they think. They may have some specific things that they want to incentivize. They are supposed to come back with the best uses for Ansonia, not just any business uses, but the best type that would fit well here. Those are the ones that you may want to incentivize.

Mr. Scarlata then addressed the Storefront Improvement Plan. He stated that this is where they are going to try and use the \$50,000 that they have reserved for facades. He stated that there is an error, on the third page of the application procedure it talks about a 0% loan. It is actually a 1% interest loan.

Mr. Scarlata then stated that he is working on the website with them. They are trying to come up with a design or logo for the front page. He also stated that the Farmer’s Market is ending. He stated that they are going to do things a bit differently. He stated that the vendors would only be those that are producer only. The Farmer’s Market will be producer only market. He stated that there wasn’t enough time this year for the vendors that we had to be able to grow enough to support a booth at the Farmer’s Market. The produce has to be Connecticut grown. The state will pull certifications if they find that produce is purchased from out of state and brought in to be sold at a Farmers Market. The state allows 51/49% ratio of grow your own and buyer produce. That is allowed, but Mr. Scarlata stated that he would like to get the community gardens involved. The

nature Center has a huge community garden. Massaro's farm was approached this year, but all of his produce was already spoken for. He had nothing left to sell. The owner of Darling Farms is his Vice-President. That person was a part of the Farmers Market because he has his own farm in Woodbridge. The Readiness program in the Middle School wanted to speak about the community gardens and tying that into the Farmers Market.

Mr. Goldson stated that he has spoken to Massaro Farms himself and he believes that they are interested in selling and possibly having their own stand in the future. Mr. Scarlata asked Mr. Flaherty what the concern was from Planning and Zoning. He stated that the main concern was for public health and safety. He further stated that they were concerned that the Farmers Market vendors would clean up after themselves. He then noted that he was very pleased that after the Market had ended that there was no evidence of litter or anything else. He stated that he doesn't see any issues. They should be able to continue on next year. Mr. Scarlata stated that he had been told by a number of people that they were going to be a part of the market, such as Tidmarsh's and Eddies bringing baked goods. Unfortunately, it seemed as though "time just got in the way." He further stated that there were some vendors that were going to come down with local honey, jams, preserves, and jellies. Unfortunately, there really wasn't enough traffic.

Mr. Scarlata then regressed to the Store-front Improvement program. He stated that this has had a few incarnations. He then explained that the owner of Millie's had asked if he could use this money to replace the flooring inside the building. At that point, this program wasn't ready. He told the owner that the program was supposed to be for façade work. Mr. Flaherty stated that according to the program under purpose, it states, "Bring commercial buildings into compliance with the Building Code." He then explained that according to the way that it's worded, you could use the funds for inside the buildings for code compliance.

Mr. Flaherty then suggested that we have more specificity and compliance with the City Center Plan incorporated into the program. That would lay out the type of improvements that you want to make so that it's in keeping with the downtown theme and continuity with downtown. Planning and Zoning can tell you what size sign but they can't tell you anything about the color or form, etc. because if you do you get into first amendment issues. However, with the loan program, the EDC can be more restrictive due to the fact that EDC is in actuality paying for it. It's EDC's proposal. Mr. Flaherty then stated that according to the proposal, it is a two-year loan, but at the same time, you are saying that they don't have to pay anything the first year. You may want to make it a three-year loan and give them the first year without any mandatory payments and then within the next two years they must repay it. On the page that begins with the words, "An Improvement Budget..." it lists "Graffiti Removal" as one of the items that is being done. This is not listed in the beginning of the program packed under "Purpose." In addition, with regard to graffiti removal, we may want to make it a one-time expenditure. He then stated that the building owner should have to give the approval on any application rather than rely on the lease. There should be a spot for the building owner to grant approval for any improvements to be made to the building. Finally, is the loan for

\$2,000 once or more than once per applicant? Can the same applicant apply more than once? Mr. Scarlata stated that if someone has a few items that need to be repaired, should that be bundled together, or should it be individual applications for each project. That is one area up for discussion. Some owners have very little that they would like to fix, and others would have quite a lot. There are some instances where one person owns the building and there are several stores attached to the building. It would be nice if we were to be able to coordinate all the businesses to have a theme that they would all have to conform to that theme.

Mr. Scarlata asked if within the City Center plan, is there a way that we could do that. He was told that Planning and Zoning cannot restrict anything except for the size of the sign, no strobe lights, and the timing of an electronic signs message (the length of time that the message is displayed), and the percentage of signage on a storefront. The City Center plan gives guidelines.

Mr. Scarlata then moved onto new business. He stated regarding Connecticut Main Street Center, we have been members of that organization by default because of the Valley Chamber of Commerce. Bill Purcell took out a blanket membership for all of the Valley Towns. Unfortunately, our membership has expired. If we would like to take advantage of some of the programs that they offer, we need to become members again. The cost is \$750. However, we only have \$500 to spend on this. He would have to request some funds from BOAT from one of our line items.

Mr. Cassetti made a motion to approve spending \$750 to become members of the Connecticut Main Street Center. The motion was seconded by Mr. Flaherty. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Scarlata then addressed the Historic Restoration Fund Grants. He stated that he was speaking with Libby Meissner of Crave Restaurant, and she informed him that if they maintained historic integrity we would still be able to qualify for grant money to be used on the Opera House. He has been trying to substantiate that. He needs to get verification that this is true. He has spoken to the state historical society about this. Apparently, the rules are not as strict. When he spoke to the state, he added that this is not city property. If it was owned by the municipality or non-profit, the money is readily available from the state. If it's privately owned, they can get grant assistance, not necessarily as much as if it were a non-profit or municipally owned. It may be a good idea for the owner of this building to team up with a non-profit to help him in the restoration. He's never been able to get any funding. Mr. Flaherty stated that from the way he understands it, the problem is that the requirements for the fire codes are very stringent to be able to get people into the third floor. When you rehab a building there has to be a cost/benefit ratio. So if you could put 1000 people on the third floor and spend \$100,000 to be able to do that, you'll be able to re-coop your costs. However, if the cost is the same but you can only hold 100 people, then it's problematic. From what he understands, the problem is the fire codes.

Mr. Scarlata then addressed the ATP/Palmer building situation. He stated that there are several investors that are interested in developing the property.

Mr. Scarlata then informed the members that he put together a mock newsletter so that he could show the web site developer his vision. He presented his newsletter to the members. He feels that this may be a good way to let people know more about Ansonia. There is a journalism class that is interested in writing stories. He has made some contacts to see what the cost would be and the Connecticut Post said that they would get some pricing for printing and distribution. Mr. Goldson stated that this could also be made into an electronic piece with links as well.

Mr. Scarlata then stated that October is manufacturing month. He informed the board that he is trying to join with Derby to do some advertising things to promote the cities as a joint effort. He got together with Mark Wiseman, Linda Gentile and others and developed a TV Spot. Mark has been looking to do some historical documentaries on the Valley. The spot will begin with students at Emmitt O'Brien and travel to different facilities such as Stelray Plastics and end at Fountain Lake at Spectrum Plastic and end in the ATP Palmer Building to highlight the potential of new manufacturing facilities there. They will be looking to get something finished before the end of the month. This will be no cost to us.

Mr. Scarlata had nothing more to discuss with the members and entertained a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting ended at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Sardinha  
Secretary