

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
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MINUTES

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, THURSDAY, January 15, 2014 ALDERMANIC CHAMBERS 7:00 PM

The Economic Development Commission held its Regular monthly meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2014. The meeting began at 7:05 P.M.

Roll call:

Vincent Scarlata	present
Greg Seccombe	present
Bart Flaherty	present
Sal Hanaif	present
Keith Murray	present
Terri Goldson	present
Bill Luneski	present
Horace Behrle	present
Jeff Sweeney	present

9 present, 0 absent

Also present:

Mayor David Cassetti
Peter Kelly, Economic Development Director

Mr. Scarlata opened the meeting at 7:00. The meeting began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Mr. Scarlata entertained motions to accept November's minutes. Mr. Behrle made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Flaherty seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Scarlata then asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. Alderman Charlie Stowe thanked Mrs. Sardinha for doing such a wonderful job of condensing the minutes. He then stated that the Senior Center is looking for someone or a group to make a blue vinyl sign saying "Senior Center". He then stated that DeCarlo and Doll mentioned that they had a Route 8 corridor plan. He feels that it would be

a good idea to purchase it if they have to or find out how to get it from them. We may be using it in the future. H feels that it would definitely help. He stated that he was in the finance committee meeting and he would like to have the commission review the budget so that they can get the money that the commission absolutely needs.

Corporation Council Marini stated that the new administration wants to have a real active role and aggressive approach to Economic Development. He then stated that he wished to congratulate the members of the commission due to the first use of the tax incentive program with Better packages coming into town from Shelton. He then stated that Mayor Cassetti would like to get a Downtown Council organized to focus on the Downtown area.

Melissa Torres, (a guest) stated that Mayor Cassetti suggested that she might want to attend the meeting tonight as she would like to get involved in the City government.

Mr. Scarlata asked Mr. Kelly if there were any communications that needed to be addressed. Mr. Kelly indicated that there were none.

Mr. Scarlata then asked if there were any bills. He was told that there were two that needed to be paid. They were both for Arrow Printers for a total of \$39.30. Mr. Flaherty made a motion to pay the bill. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murray. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Scarlata moved on to the Director's report. Mr. Kelly stated that the members have in their packets some charts which gives a "thumbnail sketch" of what he's been doing. He then indicated that in regard to BH Care, it's long range strategic planning. He attended a meeting of their working group. It was suggested that he host a Community meeting which solicitation of feedback on what the community would like to see the City of Ansonia look like at some point, how would we like to assemble those assets, etc.

Mr. Scarlata asked Corporation Council Marini about the program that is proposed to go into the Ansonia Community Action Building. He was told that the City has gone into a lease with a group called "The Work Place". He stated that they offer job training, job finding services, retraining in specific areas. It's a nonprofit. They get their funding from public and private entities. The group has also offered to host an office of Veteran's Affairs out of that same building. They are also talking about allowing TEAM to occupy the second floor of that building. He then stated that the City is trying to increase the amount of services Ansonia offers. Mr. Behrle stated that we have a lot of homeless people since The Birmingham Group has been in Town. He then asked why we are leasing a building to them if they are already in a building on East Main Street. He stated that the building that they are talking about leasing to them was the Community Center for the kids in the Northend. He then asked what was going to happen with the kids? He was told that it had been leased by the Ansonia Community Action. Mr. Marini then stated that there has been concerns if they decide to engage with any organization that provides services, then the arrangement will be very specific about what programs that can be at that location and which ones that they don't want there. He then stated that with The Work Place, the Ansonia residents have first priority. It's a job training and helping job seekers. If TEAM comes in, we already know that we have to be very specific on the scope of what services they could offer. What we want to do is have something that's going to offer services and solve problems. Mr. Behrle then asked again what is going to happen to the kids that are going there now? The building is going to be leased to The Work Place, which is a nonprofit job training place that receives federal funding to do those tasks.

Potentially to put TEAM, which is a social service provider on the second floor, but is a different organization than BH Care. Birmingham is not at all affiliated with either of these groups at all. Mr. Behrle stated that he would like to know where the children will be going to now. Mr. Kelly told him that the building is vacant. Mr. Marini informed him that as far as the City knows there is nothing happening at that building at all. Mr. Goldson stated that from his understanding the program that had been running at that facility no longer receives funding. They had been keeping the after school activities in that building. They had been told that the City was no longer going to support that building as a Community Center because the City wanted to make a profit from that building. Mr. Flaherty stated that the Boys and Girls Club bus was transporting children to that building as late as last summer. Mr. Flaherty suggested that these children are now going to the Boys and Girls Club. Mr. Marini stated that it wasn't this administration's position to take that building to make money. They felt that this was an opportunity to serve the community. Alderman Stowe stated that the Aldermen discussed this at length and felt that this was a wonderful opportunity to have people that can't find jobs or have low paying jobs and can't make a living to be able to get some help. Council Marini stated that he is going to see where these children have been displaced to. Mr. Hanaif stated that he feels that the building should be leased to The Work Place for a larger amount than was agreed to. He stated that The Workplace is a state and federal funded program. They are located all over the state. He thinks that there are 10 to 12 of them all over the state. Their job is to train and teach people the skills that they need to be able to go into a new career. They get a lot of money from federal and state funding. He feels that we should be charging them a reasonable rent. Ms. Torres stated that she feels that the WorkPlace should provide the city with documentation regarding the numbers of people that they are helping, those that have found jobs, how many have not and how long they have been finding those jobs. She feels that if the numbers justify the low rent, then it should be acceptable. Corporation Council Marini added that there will also be the Ansonia Office of Veterans Services located in the building as well. Mr. Flaherty asked if BH Care is involved with this at all. He was told that they are not.

Mr. Scarlata moved onto the façade program. Mr. Seccombe stated that Libby Meisner applied for the program for each of her two businesses. She is going to remove the old awnings and replace them with new ones. She is also going to move the store sign from 98 Main Street to 96 Main Street. She is also planning on painting the store front. The Committee approved the applications and is making the recommendation to the Commission to approve her applications. Mr. Murray then stated that the owner from Antonio's also applied for the program but his application package is not complete as the building owners signature is not on the application. He is looking for signage. He suggested that the Commission could approve that application pending the owner's signature. Mr. Scarlata thought that could be done if the Commission approved it. Mr. Flaherty made a motion to approve the applications of Antonio's , Only For Her and Crave for the façade program with the conditions that the property owners sign off on the applications, that the awnings do not have any names on them, and that they fit within the City Center guidelines as far as color and so forth and motif and that they are within the Zoning regulations, signage criteria. The motion was seconded by Mr. Behrle. All were in favor of the motion.

Mr. Scarlata then moved onto the West Main Street project. He stated that the bids come back the end of January. Nine packets have been picked up so far. The bids must be in by the 30th and they will be opened at 11:30 at City Hall. This project is for the construction of the parking lot. There is still discussion regarding what to do about the eastern side of that street where the businesses are located. Half of the street will be done with this project. There was a discussion about possibly screening off the dumpsters so it would improve the looks of that side of West Main Street.

Mr. Scarlata then addressed New Business. He'd like to have the Commission transition from a "think tank" to more of an "Action Commission" that oversees some of the work that's going on around town. We have several projects at the moment. We have the ATP, we have discussions regarding the Armory. The EDC can pilot all of these projects. He feels that it would be nice if the commission could have a hand in making some of these projects into a reality. There had been a committee regarding the Armory, but it is now just a handful of individuals. Mr. Seccombe stated that he and Mr. Luneski could start up the Ansonia Business Council (ABC) again. They would have quarterly meetings so that they could stay in touch with the community. Mr. Scarlata asked if this meeting would need minutes, etc. He was told that it would not be a government entity and would not need to have minutes. The only thing that the members need to be aware of is that if there are five or more members at a meeting, it would be considered a quorum and one of the members would have to leave or minutes would have to be taken and submitted.

He then stated that Mustang Sally's is scheduled to open the end of February. Mr. Seccombe asked what they will be using for parking. He was told that the parking is the East Main Street parking lot in addition to the small amount of parking available in the lot adjacent to the building itself.

Mr. Scarlata asked if Mr. Hanaif could inform the members about what is going on with the Armory in the future. Mr. Hanaif said that he would be glad to do so.

Mr. Scarlata then moved on to discuss the ATP/Palmer Building. He said that there will be a meeting on January 21st at 7:00 at City Hall to discuss the future plans for this building. Mr. Flaherty, Mr. Luneski, and Mr. Goldson said that they would attend this meeting so that the board members could be informed about the outcome of that meeting.

Mr. Scarlata then stated that there is a possibility of combining the Ansonia Senior Center with the Derby Senior Center. This would meet the needs of the seniors in both cities. It is hinging on if the department of Social Services is willing to fund most to the capital construction.

Mr. Scarlata then stated that Better Packaging is coming to Ansonia. Mr. Kelly stated that he just completed the first draft of the incentive agreement with Better Packaging and the City. They will do a quick walk through of the facility. He is going to collect information from them to submit an application to DECD's Enterprise Corridor Zone program. If they are approved through DECD, Ansonia will not have to fund the entire tax abatement. Mr. Sweeney asked if Better Packaging accept the negotiation and the offer as it was presented based on the last meeting that EDC had, knowing that was the best that EDC could do? He was told that they did try to get a better deal but they found out that this was the best we could do. The abatement will begin October 1st of the year that they move in.

Mr. Flaherty announced that Cumberland Farms purchased the properties behind and next to them including the former "Bell and Beep". They are going to tear the existing building down and put a 4,000 square feet building with a sidewalk on Pershing Drive. The entrance will be located where Bell and Beep was located. They will also be adding another two pumps to the gas station.

Mr. Luneski asked if there was a way that the commission could be made aware of these types of developments sooner rather than later? He was told that Mr. Flaherty would be willing to do this in the future. Mr. Flaherty then stated that P & Z had rejected a 28 lot subdivision on Granite Terrace. They

prevailed in court and now the same applicant has a 10 lot proposal and a 15 lot proposal. At this point it is in the informal discussion stages with the applicant and P & Z. It would be for residential lots.

Mr. Luneski stated that the City needs to look at who they are marketing to. He then handed out a document for the members review. He would like to have this report added to the agenda to be discussed at the February meeting. Mr. Flaherty made a motion to place the report on the February agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murray. All were in favor of the motion.

There was no other business to come before the Commission.

Mr. Flaherty made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Behrle seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion.

The meeting ended at 9:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Sardinha