

BRISTOL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MINUTES
Monday, June 24, 2019, 5:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, City Hall

ATTENDEES: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu, Council Member Mills, Commissioners Cyr, Goldwasser, Hick, Lafreniere, Passamano, Rivers, Schmelder

ABSENT: - - -

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Nielsen, Marketing & P.R. Specialist, Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator, David Sgro, Housing & Project Specialist

GUESTS: Eduardo Garces, Café Real

I. Mayor Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. Public Participation - None

III. **Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular BDA Board Meeting of May 20, 2019. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and Commissioner Rivers abstained. The minutes were accepted.**

IV. Correspondence/Communications:

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to file the correspondence and communications, seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. Motion passed.

V. New Business:

A. City/Town Development Act

Every five years we have the opportunity to approve these powers which are made available to us through this act. If approved by the BDA, this is then forwarded to City Council for action on the resolution and they hold a public hearing. If passed, this is then placed on the ballot in November as a referendum.

One of the types of things this act allows us to do is to implement tax abatement programs other than the Enterprise Zone and Urban Jobs programs. We would also have the ability to allow a private company to borrow funds at the City's borrowing rate which is very competitive.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve a resolution to continue exercising powers granted under the City and Town Development Act and also approve a motion that the City Council and the City of Bristol schedule a public hearing to address the continuation of the Connecticut City and Town Development Act, which grants the City of Bristol additional authority to aid and promote industrial and other forms of economic development. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion.

B. Board of Finance Transfer Requests

Justin provided background on why these requests are being made.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve the Board of Finance transfer requests as follows: \$22.00 from the BDA City Postage account to the BDA Travel Reimbursement account; \$327 from the Regular Wages & Salaries account to the Overtime Wages & Salaries account; and \$2,146 from the Regular Wages & Salaries account to the Other Wages account to cover account overages for year end 2019 and to forward to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to approve the Board of Finance transfer request as follows: To transfer \$25,000 from the Economic Development Expenses account to the Small Business Grants account and to forward to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

C. Grant Update – Café Real

Eduardo Garces provided an update on his business plan. He had been granted an extension for his grant through the end of June. This past winter he travelled to Columbia for family matters and also made many contacts with the coffee farmers there. The building in which his business will be located has a new owner and he has now arranged to sign a new lease. His plan is still to go forward. The plumbing and electrical work has been accomplished and is awaiting inspection by the authorities. He has purchased a coffee roaster and has been attending expos in the U.S. and abroad to become better informed on the operation of the equipment. Justin added that they have been meeting consistently and together made the decision not to rush the process. Wherever Eduardo has presented his coffee for sale, as he has locally in the Bristol Farmers' Market, he has sold out. Eduardo has met today with the new building owner and they have come to an agreement on the lease terms. Discussion.

The Mayor would like to see the details of this new lease before moving forward with a second extension. She believes in an investment in the West End and is asking if this matter should be forwarded to the StartUP Bristol Task Force. Eduardo added that much of the time he spent in Columbia was in training and he has been certified as a barista and obtained the required skills. He is also certified to rate coffees. So far all his expenses have been self-funded and he is committed to this new enterprise. He feels that 3 months is plenty of time to complete the final stages in order to open the business. No additional funds are being requested. There is still 18 months remaining on his current lease. Discussion.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to amend the grant agreement for Café Real to extend the date from June 30, 2019, to September 30, 2019. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion was passed. A new agreement will be signed.

The Mayor reminded Justin to bring this matter to the StartUP Bristol Task Force.

D. Downtown Update

Bristol Health medical facility has opened on Centre Sq. The purchase and sale agreement for Parcel 10 (Cyr & Wilson) will be executed within the next week or so. All the specifics of the sale have been agreed on. They are currently working on their site plan. After construction begins the small parking area on Main Street will no longer be available. Justin is working with the City's Engineering Department and the City's consultant on the completion of the plans for the on-street parking for Riverside Avenue. He is waiting to receive the related costs.

Better Half Brewing has their approvals from the City side and is awaiting approval from the State liquor commission. The holdup has to do with the two businesses operating in the same facility with a common entrance. A meeting will be forthcoming with the liquor commission and local officials to iron out the details. Mo's has done a soft opening.

Parcel 1 and 3: Tabacco & Son Builders continue to work with their architect. The Letter of Intent is currently with the City's attorneys. They are also working on a reciprocal land use agreement and an easement agreement.

Commissioner Goldwasser inquired about standards for Centre Sq. Goman and York are still working on this. These will be centered around land use basically.

The Mayor commented that the Farmers' Market and the Bristol Health opening brought a lot of people downtown.

Justin added that there will be a forthcoming project at the vacant property on the corner of Route 6 and North Main. The Mayor also mentioned that they have toured the Bingham and O'Connell properties and Bingham is set to begin leasing probably at the end of June. Justin is meeting with Mr. Lazarus tomorrow (owner) and will inquire about tours of both facilities.

There is one other party showing some interest in a Centre Square property but it is very early in the process. Other inquiries are being received but nothing tangible.

Commissioner Goldwasser commented that the Trash to Treasure program from Public Works was a great idea. Recycling collection also continues every week. All the booths were very successful and many sold out early. Mr. Garces added that he was selling twice as much as last year. The Mayor added that the Public Works department did a great job of cleaning and preparing the area.

E. Small Business Grants

Justin reported on two current grants. Quick Auto on Andrews Street has expanded and paved their lot. Nauti-Cuts is purchasing some new appliances and is awaiting a quotation.

Pending applications: Absolute Shine needs an overhead door; Bristol Sports Bar & Grill has a couple of projects.

F. Bristol Development Authority Name

The Mayor is considering another name which more aptly describes the services of this department. If there is interest by this board, the Mayor will put in a request to Corporation Counsel to investigate the process and report back to the board.

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to authorize the Mayor to contact Corporation Counsel regarding a name change for the Bristol Development Authority. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and the motion was passed.

VI. New Business by Commissioners:

Council Member Mills inquired when the new café on the corner of Oakland Street and Farmington Avenue was set to open. Justin said the owner has just contacted him today regarding an opening but he does not yet have a date. Council Member Mills also inquired about a new Mexican restaurant at the former D'Angelo's – Justin has tried reaching out but not yet touched base with them. Council Member Mills also asked about a restaurant across from Home Depot which may be opening. We are not yet aware of a new restaurant in that area.

Justin added that they are still working on a traffic study in the Big Lots area to be able to work on a large development in the neighboring property.

Commissioner Goldwasser commented that both Oasis Restaurant and Crystal Diner have changed hands but continue to operate as before.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu said that a meeting was held with Dr. Niznick, the owner of the DoubleTree, and an addition is being planned for that facility called "Home2". This addition will have its own kitchen, a walkway, four venues, additional meeting space, and extended stay. He now owns the three parcels across from the elevator testing facility. He is also interested in some industrial development on one parcel which is not being used for the addition. This will be a major investment.

The Mayor also provided an update on the unexpected closure of Firehouse Subs but not much is known at this point. Justin added that the City is working closely with Theis Steel.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu excused herself from the meeting at 5:58 p.m. Commissioner Schmelder continued as Chair.

VII. Old Business:

A. CDBG Program and Grants Updates

Dawn Leger reported she is in the process of finalizing the Annual Action Report for CDBG. All grantees and applicants have been notified. The contracts for Year 45 are being returned to us. Last year's project are being wrapped up.

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Rivers. Report accepted.

Dawn Leger reported that an increase for 894 Middle Street has been requested from the Board of Finance. They are continuing to find high concentrations of lead in that area. There are a number of other grants which are in the process of being submitted or have been submitted – these are listed in the report. DEEP has hired someone so we are hoping to hear news about the Open Space grant in the fall. Justin reported that a grant has been submitted to the Department of Agriculture for the Farmers' Market.

Commissioner Rivers made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Hick. Report accepted.

B. Economic Development and Marketing Update

Justin reported that he has met with the company that holds the mortgage on the old Dodge property to discuss not only current maintenance and aesthetic issues but also long-term ideas for the site. They discussed possibly supporting the Parks Department and Memorial Boulevard in some way but the conversations are very early and all possibilities are being explored.

Commissioner Goldwasser inquired about the Chic Miller property. Justin said that NVCOG had reached out to the BDA as they had an opportunity to obtain funding that would deal with properties that had petroleum issues and we are currently waiting to hear from them on that possibility.

Commissioner Rivers made a motion to accept the report, the motion was seconded and the report was accepted.

VIII. Old Business by Commissioners: There was no old business by commissioners.

IX. Committee Reports:

A. Marketing Committee

Dawn Nielsen reported she has been spending time promoting events, especially the opening day of the Farmers' Market which turned out to be very successful. She received favorable emails from Bristol Health and the person who organized their opening event thanking the City and all the departments for their hard work. She has been spending a lot of time doing public relations, especially at the schools and has met with Dr. Carbone who will be the new Superintendent of Schools. They exchanged some good ideas and Dawn will be working with the Board of Ed to improve their website and assist with the promotion of Bristol's school system. She will also work to promote the private schools in Bristol.

She has attended a lot of ribbon cuttings as many small businesses have recently opened their doors in Bristol and she has been in contact with the media regarding these and they have received coverage. Upcoming events include the promotion of the Little League Softball and Baseball Tournaments. Dawn, Justin, and Dave Mills have met with Amry Shelby, assistant to Corey Wright at Giamatti and exchanged ideas on the promotion of this yearly event. These include signage in local businesses to welcome the families and a restaurant promotion. Locals will be reminded that these games are open to the public and free and they are also working with the local little league organizations to have a team night. They will hopefully have some video interviews as well. Local information will be contained in the goodie bags that the participants receive.

Commissioner Passamano made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Rivers, all voted in favor and the report was accepted.

X. Any Other Business: There was no other business.

XII. Adjournment

Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cyr, all present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Christine Cooper, Recording Secretary