

## ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

July 18, 2012 7:15 pm

Trumbull Town Hall

#### I. Attendance

**Commission:** Ralph Sather, Gary Bean, James Abraham, Scott Wich, William Haberlin, Jack Berg

**Commissioners Absent:** Tom Ginis, Beryl Kaufman, Evelyn Zmary

**Town Staff:** Dan Nelson, Ed Lavernoich,

**Public:** Paul Griffith

#### II. Old Business

A. Mr. Sather called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. He passed out the agenda, the June meeting minutes for review, and other materials to go with discussion items on the agenda. Mr. Abraham made a motion to approve the June 6, 2012 minutes and seconded by Mr. Bean. The vote was unanimously approved.

#### III. Recap & Discussion of ECDC Business Appreciation Breakfast

A. Mr. Lavernoich discussed the outcome of the Breakfast that was held on June 19<sup>th</sup> and passed out a list of attendees. He discussed the methods by which potential attendees were contacted, and stated that approximately 40% of the attendees were people that responded to the e-mail invitations. The majority of the people who attended were contacted and invited by word of mouth, and perhaps 15-20 of the attendees responded to the mailed invitations. He discussed what did not work well and stated that the system for keeping track of actual attendance needs to be improved; he took responsibility for the lack of an adequate attendance system at this year's event. The consensus of the commission was that the name tags could be improved by making the first name on the tags larger. The cost for the breakfast came to just about \$2,500 which included the hall fee and audio visual equipment. Mr. Berg mentioned that he noticed a lot of the attendees were not the target audience; decision-makers of the companies in Trumbull. It was discussed that we need to build a data base of current businesses in Town which supports the Commission's activities, and that the Commission should build a relationship with those companies. It was said that as Mr. Lavernoich and Jamie Bratt go around visiting the different companies that a data base will be built. The database can enable more personal invitations to next year's breakfast. Mr. Nelson noted that we have the GIS system on the Town's

website to help build the database. Mr. Lavernoich also stated that the hard mailer that went out was names from the top personal property tax payers. He explained that generally there were no contact names, just company names. Mr. Sather gave a thank you to everyone that helped pull the breakfast off and said Mr. Lavernoich and his team did a very good job.

#### IV. New Business

- A. Mr. Lavernoich went over the Directors report for the month of July and gave an update of 112 Quarry Road, 80 Monroe Turnpike, 100 Quarry Road, 20 Nutmeg Road, Trumbull Center and Westfield Mall. Mr. Lavernoich stated that he attended a ribbon cutting ceremony along with First Selectman Herbst for the grand opening of Guacamole Grill on Tuesday. It is located on Main Street in the former Marty Kane's Deli. Mr. Lavernoich updated the Commission on business development and projects on 41-51 Monroe Turnpike, 25-45 Commerce Drive/Merritt Boulevard, 2415 Reservoir Avenue and 5520 Park Avenue. Mr. Lavernoich and Mrs. Bratt met with a Stamford based company looking to move to Trumbull. They also meet with the Greater Bridgeport Board of Realtors who would like to build an office on White Plains Road. Mr. Ginis referred a company to Mr. Lavernoich that is a specialty fitness studio requiring ceilings 20 feet high.
- B. Several commissioners asked business people at the breakfast what the single most important thing that could be done, and a number of people mentioned White Plains Road being dangerous. There was discussion of how the crosswalks could be marked better and Mr. Nelson brought up the meeting that was held at the Fire Department on White Plains Road regarding the widening of the State Road. It was agreed that drivers speed on the road especially coming down Churchill Road and widening the road may help reduce accidents but it will not help with the speeding. Mr. Nelson said that the Police Department will be monitoring the street. The Commissioners discussed a way to help Trumbull Center become more of a downtown center through economic development while slowing down the speed of traffic. Mr. Lavernoich will be contacting someone at DOT explaining the goal and how we can work together to make Trumbull Center a safer, better town center.
- C. Mr. Lavernoich handed out the latest draft of the Tax Abatement Ordinance. He discussed the logic behind the changes made to the version of the ordinance that he had been given, and the collaboration with the Town Attorney on creating the language. Mr. Nelson confirmed that it was the First Selectman's intention to introduce the ordinance to the Town Council in the fall for its consideration. Mr. Lavernoich discussed his intention to finalize a draft of the language with the Town Attorney and

then request that the Tax Partnership Screening Committee convene to consider the ordinance in August. Mr. Abraham asked Mr. Lavernoich to prepare a brief summary of the ordinance for the commission's September meeting.

- D. Karen Delvecchio of Trumbull Chamber of Commerce sent Mr. Lavernoich a list of winners for Business in Bloom that was held on June 26<sup>th</sup> at Ten Asian Bistro. Mr. Lavernoich stated that he sent Dr. Patrignelli a letter to let him know the Committee nominated his new office project on Church Hill Road for recognition at this event.
- E. Mr. Lavernoich reported on the "100 visits" and stated that he and Mrs. Bratt have visited 16 companies. He discussed the plans to schedule meetings. Mr. Lavernoich will be going to one of the Trumbull Business Networks meetings. He will also be getting names from the delinquent property tax list to visit and also will visit realtors and commercial industrial property owners. He discussed how a letter had been sent to all of the property owners and businesses in Trumbull Corporate Park regarding the current paving project, to encourage contact with them. The commission also discussed how to be more pro active and get the word out that they are here to help you with any problem. The First Selectman's press release of mid-July regarding the meetings with local businesses was discussed. It was also discussed how Trumbull can receive awards like we have in the past such as the one in *Family Circle Magazine*.

V. Other Commission Business

- A. Mr. Abraham made a motion seconded by Mr. Bean which was unanimously approved to skip the August meeting.
- B. The marketing effort that was being worked on while Deborah Cox was Director was discussed. Mr. Sather spoke about the evolution of the Town's marketing message. Mr. Sather will put together what they did and update Mr. Lavernoich and send an electronic copy to the Commissioners. It was agreed that in upcoming meetings the Commission would discuss the need to revamp the marketing materials, and discuss advertising.
- C. The 2013 budget expense as of now is for Mr. Lavernoich's salary and the registration for Jamie Bratt's attendance at the International Council of Shopping Centers conference in Boston. Mr. Lavernoich stated that Mrs. Bratt has been a long time member of the ICSC, and that her expenses beyond registration for the conference would be very limited.
- D. Mr. Sather spoke about the roles of the Commissioners and asked Mr. Lavernoich for his opinion on how he thinks we can move forward working

together. Mr. Abraham mentioned that the Commissioners should attend events since Mr. Lavernoich cannot extend himself everywhere. Mr. Sather stated that everyone has their own area of expertise and they are there to help and to bounce ideas off of. Mr. Lavernoich will get back to the Commission with what he needs to be successful and make the "Working for You" slogan a reality.

VI. Community Input

- A. Paul Griffith spoke about a website he owns called localize.biz that the Commission can use for businesses in town.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Sather made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM which was seconded by Mr. Abraham, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.