

Town of Trumbull
Economic and Community Development Commission
Revised Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting – Zoom Videoconferencing

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission of the Town of Trumbull was held via videoconferencing on April 11, 2023.

Attendance

Members Present: Beryl Kaufman (Chairman)
Karen DelVecchio (Vice Chairman)
Evelyn Zamary (Secretary)
Massimo Mallozzi
Terrence Griffiths

Members Absent: Marshall Marcus
Ralph Sather
Fred Petrossi

Also Present: Rina Bakalar – Director of Economic & Community Development
William Chin – Director of Information Technology
Gia Mentillo – Economic & Community Development Clerk

Chairman Kaufman called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of March 7, 2023 Minutes

A motion to approve as amended the March 7, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Vice Chairman DelVecchio and seconded by Commissioner Zamary. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Mallozzi asked that page three of the minutes be amended to change “Mary 3rd” to “May 3rd.”

Chairman’s Report

Chairman Kaufman stated the ribbon cutting for Bare Skin & Wax to be a success, noting the facility to be very impressive, elegant, and a great addition to the Trumbull business community. She stated that Greater Bridgeport Transit (GBT) will be submitting an application to CT DOT for a micro-transit pilot program for Trumbull and asked the Commission to consider submitting a letter of support for said application.

Director Bakalar explained the program to be a state grant, two-year pilot initiative aiming to provide affordable on-demand transit services which effectively fill gaps in existing public transit systems. There will be robust availability of round-trip services provided through this

program which will facilitate access to bus connections and local amenities. GBT felt Trumbull to be a good fit for this competitive grant program as existing bus transit services are limited, and the Town is home to various styles of businesses in need of employees. First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro has written a letter of support for this program, and Ms. Bakalar stated that additional letters of support would be greatly appreciated and beneficial for the application.

A motion to write a letter of support for the aforementioned grant submission was made by Commission Mallozzi and seconded by Commissioner Griffiths. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Bakalar will be submitting an application to CT DECD for the CT Communities Challenge grant to obtain funds to install a sewer line on Route 25 tying to the development at 7182 Main Street (a fully approved, 20 million dollar project). This is a critical infrastructure project as it would support a mixed-use development serving businesses and residents in Trumbull and Monroe alike. She asked that the Commission consider writing a letter of support for this application as well.

A motion to write a letter of support for the Town's application to the CT DECD for the CT Community Challenges grant opportunity was made by Vice Chairman DeVecchio and seconded by Commissioner Zamary. The motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Business Update:

Director Bakalar thanked the commissioners who attended the grand opening ceremony for Bare Skin & Wax. This med-spa business was started as a smaller practice in Suite Space at 10 Broadway Road. This is an excellent example of how flexible, cross-industry work space can facilitate business expansion.

There was a recent article in the CT Post on the revitalization of the Trumbull Corporate Park. Ms. Bakalar voiced her appreciation for Brian Gioiele who wrote the article and informed that she has provided him with information on several other businesses which have recently committed to Trumbull locations with hopes that they will be covered in future press pieces.

There are efforts underway to improve the signage for the Corporate Park entrance by replacing the empty directory spaces on the existing sign, which impractically limit the number of listings, with a way finding map of the area highlighting building locations and main roadways. Ms. Bakalar noted that Gia Mentillo is leading this project for the department.

Community Development Update:

The Director provided updates on several Town infrastructure projects. The Route 111 improvements planned for the area in front of Prime One Eleven are underway. Though the Town has received the majority of the equipment for the new signal light and footings for said light have been installed, they are awaiting the arrival of the signal arm in order to proceed with the project. In the meantime, driveway reconfigurations, retaining wall installation, and new sidewalks facilitating trail connections are being finalized. Once the light is fully installed, the

existing cross-walk will be decommissioned and the flashing beacon lights will be moved to Spring Hill Road for safety improvements. Weather dependent, there are hopes to complete this project by the end of June.

The Town has received approval for intersection and sidewalk improvements for the Long Hill Green area which were put out to bid separately for a myriad of reasons. A contractor has been selected for sidewalk improvements which will begin on the western side of Route 111 (where Governors Ridge Condo Complex is). Improvements to the eastern side of the roadway will commence after the proposed intersection changes are complete as to avoid safety issues caused by pedestrian crossings in the absence of a crosswalk. Because bids for intersection/signal improvements came back higher than initially expected, the Town is pursuing additional funding for this portion of the project through a LOTCIP grant application. First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro has been very outspoken in support of this project as it is a critical safety improvement for Trumbull. The Town will be hosting a community meeting to ensure residents are adequately informed of all improvements coming to the area. Ms. Bakalar asked that the Commission help spread awareness for this event when the time comes.

Stantec's services have been engaged to design phase two of the stormwater management project on Broadway Road which the Town intends to have out to bid this summer. Weather dependent, the infrastructure project will begin in Fall 2023.

Last month, Ms. Bakalar filed a grant application with the CT Trails grant program with the aim of obtaining funding to take the sidewalk trail connect from Dunellen Road down Whitney Avenue to the Pequonnock River trail head. This project has been fully designed and can be put out to bid once the Town secures funding. Ms. Bakalar noted we should find out if we receive funding from this grant source in May. The Director informed that organizations providing grant funding seek out projects which are deemed shovel ready, meaning they are fully planned and designed, as to ensure timely use of funds. Many of the aforementioned infrastructure projects meet these criteria.

Planning Update:

Research for the Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use Study is underway. There was a meeting held on March 29th for Town staff, board, and commission members to offer their thoughts and raise questions on the study. Though there were several quality insights garnered from the meeting, Ms. Bakalar noted that additional meetings will occur with these key folks in order to gain additional insights. Director Bakalar asked whether the Commission would allow Stantec consultants, who are working on the study, to attend the May 2nd ECDC meeting so the Commission may have a more in-depth conversation about the effort. The Commission agreed to do so. The Town will be hosting public meetings for the study in the near future, affording opportunity for broader community input.

Per state mandate, Trumbull must file an affordable housing plan by June 1, 2023. For this reason, the Town has engaged the services of Planimetrics to conduct an affordable housing study. As part of this effort, there was a community meeting held at Town Hall on March 22nd. Though this event was not widely attended, there were some good insights shared. There will be another community meeting on May 3rd via Zoom at 6:30pm to provide the opportunity for

additional residential input. Ms. Bakalar asked the Commission to help spread awareness for this event, noting that there is an increasing need for affordable housing as living expenses rise. The community survey conducted for this effort closed on March 12th and received over 1300 responses. The results of this survey will be shared with the Commission and the public in the near future. In general, there appears to be support for affordable accessory dwelling units, senior housing, and workforce housing. The Director noted the possibility of having Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics join one of the next regularly scheduled ECDC meetings or perhaps having the Commission join the special meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) scheduled for April 25th for further insights on the study's efforts.

Town Planner, Rob Librandi, has put out an RFQ for the upcoming update to the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for which efforts are underway and will continue through the spring of 2024. Per state mandate, each town must update their POCD at least every 10 years.

Event Update:

The ECD Department, in collaboration with several other local organizations, is conducting a Cyber Security Readiness event for small businesses on Thursday, April 27th at Kyber Security, 75 Merritt Blvd., from 8:00am to 10:00am. Ms. Bakalar thanked commissioners and staff for their contributions to the planning of this event. Members of the BRBC have been encouraged to attend the free event, and the Trumbull Chamber of Commerce will be attending as part of their regularly scheduled April meeting. The Commission was asked to help grow awareness and attendance for this event. Ms. Bakalar also intends to conduct a virtual business resource event in the coming months.

The third annual Trumbull Restaurant Week will be held in the fall, and Trumbull's annual business appreciation breakfast will be held in late October. The Director informed that she has a potential keynote speaker in mind for the event but encouraged speaker suggestions from the Commission, noting that a panel discussion can be considered in place of a keynote speaker.

Grant Update:

Grant updates were covered during the Chairman's report section of this meeting.

Sustainable Trumbull Update

In Commissioner Sather's absence, Chairman Kaufman informed that the minutes from the most recent Sustainable Trumbull team meeting would be made available to Commissioners so that they may stay up-to-date on the team's initiatives and help to grow awareness for their efforts.

BRBC Update

In Commissioner Petrossi's absence, Director Bakalar informed that she is working on an article for BRBC's semiannual Regions Magazine (available online and in print) which will focus on various Trumbull business parks in an effort to highlight recent revitalization resulting from mixed-use transformation. Also, the BRBC is working to create a regional website that will help

support businesses in the area by providing access to various resources. Ms. Bakalar and other local ECD directors will be meeting with BRBC staff in the coming weeks to provide their thoughts on potential website content. Ms. Bakalar informed that her department is also working to obtain an intern to help update their Business Resource page of the Town website.

Vice Chairman DelVecchio stated that the CT Economic Development Association (CEDAS) is launching a new website in the coming weeks which will afford Trumbull opportunities for exposure on various goings on.

Director Bakalar stated the Why Trumbull piece is being updated to include more recent census data and highlight the Trumbull school systems ranking as the #4 school district in CT.

Chairman Kaufman asked whether the Fairfield County Business Journal is actively publishing materials. Ms. Bakalar confirmed the journal is still active.

Several commissioners provided feedback on the March 29th meeting regarding the Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use Study. Commissioner Mallozzi stated that participants may feel better prepared to speak at future meetings if they are provided with guiding questions in advance to stimulate dialogue. He also emphasized additional direction and facilitation would be helpful. Vice Chairman DelVecchio stated that additional background information on the effort at the forefront of the meeting may have helped to spark questions and comments from participants; and, although the conversation was meant to be open ended, more facilitation on the part of the meeting host would be beneficial.

Opportunity for Community Input

There was no comment from the public.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:06 p.m. by Commissioner Mallozzi and seconded by Vice Chairman DelVecchio. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo
ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi