

Town of Trumbull
Economic and Community Development Commission
Revised Meeting Minutes
August 1, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.
Trumbull Town Hall – Long Hill Conference Room

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission of the Town of Trumbull was held at Trumbull Town Hall on August 1, 2023.

Attendance

Members Present: Beryl Kaufman (Chairman)
Karen DelVecchio (Vice Chairman)
Evelyn Zamary (Secretary)
Marshall Marcus
Ralph Sather
Fred Petrossi
Terrence Griffiths

Members Absent: Massimo Mallozzi

Also Present: Rina Bakalar – Director of Economic & Community Development
Gia Mentillo – Economic & Community Development Clerk
Dan Onofrio – President of Bridgeport Regional Business Council\
Trumbull Community Television

Chairman Kaufman called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of June 6, 2023 Minutes

A motion to approve the June 6, 2023 minutes was made by Commissioner Marcus and seconded by Vice Chairman DelVecchio. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman would like to look into sharing the BRBC's *Regions* magazine article on Trumbull with other town boards and commissions.

Director's Report

Business Update:

The Economic & Community Development Department (ECD) has taken on two graduate interns from Sacred Heart University. Elizabeth Constante will be working to update the online Business Resource Center, and Anthony Sweet will be working to conduct a survey of local businesses to help inform how the department can best support them.

Several ribbon cutting events will be scheduled over the next few months for businesses including Transpak, Paul's Hair Cutters, 4Core Financial, and the Hartford Healthcare Urgent Care Center.

There are a number of businesses currently working to establish themselves in Trumbull, including several new leases at the Trumbull Mall. Ms. Bakalar is meeting with the Trumbull Mall broker monthly to help facilitate leasing activity.

Community Development Update:

The new traffic light on Route 111, in front of The Edge Fitness, is now fully operational. Absent some finishing touches, the upgrades to this area are nearly complete. The flashing cross walk beacons that were removed from this area will be moved to the Spring Hill Road cross walk near the school bus station. Ms. Bakalar thanked First Selectman Tesoro and staff members of the Route 111 planning team whom met monthly since 2018 to make these upgrades possible.

Improvements to the Long Hill Green area are well underway. Sidewalk improvements on the west side of Main Street are nearing completion and site preparations have begun for the installation of the new traffic light. Once the new signal and cross walk are complete, sidewalk improvements on the eastern side of the road will begin. The Town hopes to be out to bid in August for phase two of the stormwater management project in front of Fryborg and Abi's Falafel. Discussions regarding improvements to the green space, for which there is approximately \$100,000 of funding for, have begun. Commissioner Marcus suggested the Town consider fund raising through dedication opportunities such as bricks, benches, etc.

The Town is working to finalize dates for upcoming community meetings regarding the Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use Study and updates on Long Hill Green improvements.

Grants

The Director has applied for grant funding through the Federal Department of Transportation's Safe Streets for All program with hopes of attaining \$8.8 million of federal funding for the \$11 million project which aims to improve Trumbull Center by implementing key changes highlighted in the Trumbull Center Corridor Plan which is available on the Town website.

Ms. Bakalar will be applying for \$500,000 of funding through the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) for an adaptive re-use project at 579 Church Hill Road. The aim of this project will be to rehabilitate the Town leased structure into a structurally sound building, while highlighting its historical significance to the area. The building would serve as a Town archive center with an adjoining pocket park. The building would not be accessible by the public and only one additional parking space will be added to the area.

There are ongoing efforts by the Town to raise funds for the shovel ready Trumbull Veterans and First Responder Center project. The Town has secured \$750,000 from the House of Representatives thanks to Congressman Jim Himes, and \$1.5 million in state funding thanks to Senator Moore and the State legislative delegation. The application made for federal Senate discretionary funding for an additional \$1.2 million has made it into the THUD bill thanks to Senators Blumenthal and Murphy. The money is not guaranteed at this point. If the federal budget is approved as-is in October, then the Town will receive the requested funding, however changes to the federal budget may affect this allocation of funds.

The Gateway Commons project on the Trumbull / Monroe town line has encountered significant cost escalations. Director Bakalar has applied for a critical infrastructure grant to complete a sewer connect to the site. The Town's receipt of these funds and completion of the infrastructure project will help to off-set some of the cost escalations associated with the project so it can move forward.

Planning Update:

The ongoing Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use study has stimulated investor and tenant interest in the area. Two major organizations are looking at the space, both of which have noted the Residence on Main housing project as a key attraction. A business is looking into the Trumbull Mall as potential indoor pickle ball site. As part of this effort, a retail study has been completed for the area. The director will share this with the Commission in the future. The next community meeting regarding the study will be this Fall, likely in a location more central to Town to reach a wider array of residents.

Event Update:

The Town hosted the Fairfield County Commercial Broker Network's July 31st meeting at 101 Merritt Blvd. The new building owner was present to share information about the spaces available at the location. The event did well in sparking broker interest in the Trumbull Corporate Park as a whole. The director intends to host the network again in the future at Trumbull Mall.

The Annual Business Appreciation Breakfast will be on October 27th at 8:30am at the Trumbull Marriott. Efforts to finalize a speaker for the event are ongoing. The director asked the Commission for their assistance on this effort.

Trumbull Restaurant Week is planned for October 13th – 20th this year, and restaurant recruitment will begin shortly.

Review of Adopt-A-Ramp Program

The Adopt-A-Ramp program was started by the Trumbull Beautification Commission (which is no longer active) and allows Trumbull businesses to sponsor "Welcome to Trumbull" signage, simultaneously growing awareness for their business and helping to maintain the sign areas. The program has both State and Town parameters, dependent on the location of the sign. Gia Mentillo has worked alongside the Director, Parks Superintendent Dmitri Paris, and CT DOT staff to update the state and local requirements for the program. Those who have questions or interest in the program can contact Dmitri Paris or Director Bakalar. The Director asked that the Commission help to promote business sponsorship of the signs. The Chairman suggested sharing program information with local senior living residences. Dan Onofrio offered the BRBC's assistance in operating the program.

Business Survey & Business Resource Center

See paragraph one under "Business Update."

BRBC Update

Dan Onofrio is working to gather the regional economic and community development directors in hopes of discussing their towns' new affordable housing plans and potential opportunities for collaborative efforts. The BRBC has posted a position for a project coordinator to help attain insights on business recruitment and retention in the manufacturing sector, and potentially other sectors in the future. The BRBC aims to facilitate regular discourse with its business partners regarding industry challenges in an effort to establish solutions. A regional economic development website for the six communities in the greater Bridgeport area will be available this fall. This will serve as a resource and data hub for businesses looking to relocate to the area. There will be a business after hours event on August 2nd from 4:00-7:00pm at Parker's Steak & Scotch. The BRBC hopes to host an after-hour event at Bridge by Epoch in the coming months. The annual *Regions* magazine has been published and includes an excellent article on Trumbull Corporate Park written by Director Bakalar. Mr. Onofrio noted receiving several phone calls from interested parties who saw said article.

Chairman Kaufman reported Old Towne Restaurant no longer has a patio area due to lack of approval from Stop & Shop. The Chairman asked whether the Commission felt they could assist in this matter at all. Commissioner Marcus informed that Stop & Shop likely needs to utilize the rear space for their deliveries. Director Bakalar reported that there is a lease agreement pending for the space at the end of the plaza where the former dry cleaner that moved to Trumbull Center was located. It will be an eatery.

Sustainable Trumbull Update

Commissioner Sather stated that the Sustainable Trumbull Team is applying for bronze level recertification by August 18th. The 1,000 Trees for Trumbull initiative is ongoing. Ms. Mentillo will share the most recent team minutes with the Commission. The Director asked whether there is interest in having trees planted as part of the Long Hill Green improvement process and whether there are funds allocated for such efforts. Commissioner Marcus note the importance of using dwarfed trees to avoid blocking business sight lines. The proposed pocket park at 579 Church Hill Road may be another good location for this effort. Commissioner Marcus and Director Bakalar asked Commissioner Sather for additional information on the tree program.

Commissioner Marcus asked that staff ensure the September 5th ECDC meeting does not conflict with the September Town Council meeting.

Commissioner DelVecchio informed that CEDAS's policy committee is working on a survey for ECD directors and municipalities to offer comments to state officials prior to the next legislative session. The Director informed she would like to see changes in the ways towns can address issues with vacant properties. She noted Trumbull's ongoing efforts to tackle the extensive blight issues at 6 Cambridge Drive. Commissioner Marcus informed that neighboring business owners concerned with this property have the option to pursue legal action themselves as well.

Aspire, an organization that works with special needs children and a Dermatologist practice are moving into 7 Cambridge Drive. The owners of the Italian Corner Deli purchased the Diocese property on Main Street at the end of July.

Opportunity for Community Input

There were no members of the public present during the meeting.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:24p.m. by Commissioner Marcus and seconded by Commissioner Zamary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo
ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi