

**Town of Trumbull**  
**Economic and Community Development Commission**  
**Special Meeting Minutes**  
**August 10, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Trumbull Town Hall**  
**Long Hill Conference Room**

A special meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission of the Town of Trumbull was held at Trumbull Town Hall in the Long Hill Conference Room on August 10, 2021.

**Attendance**

Members Present: Beryl Kaufman (Vice Chairman)  
Marshall Marcus  
Karen DelVecchio  
Evelyn Zamary

Members Absent: Ralph Sather (Chairman)  
Ted Chase  
Shelby LeVino  
Eric Michel

Also Present: Rina Bakalar – Director of Economic & Community Development  
Gia Mentillo – Economic & Community Development Clerk  
Trumbull Community Television

Vice Chairman Kaufman called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

*Items I, III, and IV of the meeting Agenda were deferred to the September 14<sup>th</sup> Economic and Community Development Commission meeting due to a lack of quorum being present.*

**Director's Report**

Business Update:

Rina Bakalar shared an update on the Trumbull Local Meals Program for which the town received a \$200,000 grant. Ms. Bakalar stated that the program, intended to simultaneously address food insecurities among residents while stimulating local restaurant business, has already provided 260 meals to roughly 116 residents in partnership with 13 restaurants. After reviewing the guidelines for the program, Ms. Bakalar encouraged commissioners to reach out to residents and business owners who may benefit from utilizing this resource, noting that one restaurant has already garnered approximately \$1,500 in additional business.

Commissioner Marcus shared that some residents are hesitant to join the program because of its perceived association with Social Services. Ms. Bakalar stated that any resident who is uncomfortable using the listed contact information may feel free to reach out to her.

Ms. Bakalar stated that The Guacamole Grill is in the processing of finalizing their plans to move into the empty space in the Westfield Trumbull Mall previously occupied by Wahlburgers.

Ms. Bakalar stated that the owners of Hawley Lane Mall, National Realty, are looking to stimulate growth by establishing a 7,000 square foot shared office space within the mall, which will serve as a pilot for roughly 200 other sites throughout the country. She added that the space is projected to open in October.

Ms. Bakalar shared that, in the last month or so, two businesses have moved to Trumbull from Stratford, Lindquist Supply (30 Lindeman Drive) and The Clean Earth Project (Trumbull Tradesmen Center at 55 Merritt Blvd.), for which she is working to establish ribbon cutting dates.

The director added that Women's Health Care has leased the entire building on lower Main Street at the Bridgeport line. She commended the Planning and Zoning Commission for their attention to detail in regards to the look and feel of the space.

Ms. Bakalar stated that she is in the process of establishing a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Long Hill Green Area and its associated businesses. She added that there will likely be a separate ribbon cutting date established for Ecco restaurant.

#### Community Development Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that there are several housing developments in town nearing or at completion, adding that the 55 and older River Valley Community has beautifully completed their facility and occupancy is increasing monthly. Vice Chairman Kaufman shared that she paid a visit to the property and agrees it is a gorgeous development with a lovely couple running the facility.

Ms. Bakalar also shared that the apartments planned for the Westfield Trumbull Mall are awaiting OSTA approval prior to ground breaking.

Ms. Bakalar voiced concerns about 6 Cambridge Drive, a vacant and blighted property. She cited safety, health, and community issues including the buildings negative impact on redevelopment in the area. Ms. Bakalar stated that Jim Nugent, town attorney, is working in conjunction with the town to pursue a foreclosure of the 4-acre property given tax and blight fine arrearage.

#### Planning Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that the various Trumbull land use boards recently convened to discuss the Trumbull Center Corridor study which is well underway. The director noted that, once completed, the subsequent plan of development will be going before the Planning and Zoning Commission, affording another opportunity for people to gain insights and share opinions on the

plan. Ms. Bakalar added that Rob Librandi, Trumbull Land Use Planner, can be contacted with any questions, ideas or concerns about the plan.

Ms. Bakalar shared an update on the Trumbull Westfield Mall Study for which the town has raised approximately \$300,000 largely thanks to Senator Moore's efforts. Senator Moore got state funding in the amount of \$150,000 for the effort. The director stated she is currently working on the Request for Qualifications to hire a professional consulting team to conduct a world class planning study of the area, including but not limited to economic analytics, market data, land use consideration, etc.

#### Grant Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that the application she submitted to the Senators Office and State Representative David Rutigliano for a \$1.5 Million grant to construct a Veterans and First Responder Center has been included in the Bond bill and will need to make a bond agenda to secure the construction funding. Additional applications have been submitted to Senator Murphy and Blumenthal's offices for the member driven community project funding. Those applications are under consideration by the Senate Appropriations committee of cognizance.

Ms. Bakalar shared that there are currently several federal and state grants available pertaining to economic and community development efforts which the town may be interested in pursuing in an effort to support local growth. The director added that, she is still waiting for the applications to be released.

#### Event Update:

Prior to sharing event updates, Ms. Bakalar noted that all event plans are subject to change as COVID-19 circumstances and subsequent CDC guidelines evolve.

Ms. Bakalar stated that the Fairfield County Broker Network Lunch-In will be held on September 24<sup>th</sup> at the River Valley Resort Community, noting that preparations are underway.

The director added that the Annual Business Appreciation Breakfast is scheduled for the morning of October 15<sup>th</sup> at the Marriott Hotel, noting that invitations will be sent out after Labor Day. Ms. Bakalar stated that, though the event will be kept to the usually amount of 170 people, she has booked a significantly larger room to allow for social distancing and will establish a waiting list for additional attendees. Furthermore, she shared that she has secured Steven Andrews as the Key Note Speaker for the event per Commissioner Chase's recommendation. Commissioner Marcus asked whether there would be awards given out this year, and Ms. Bakalar said that she felt it would be best to postpone the awards for the time being. The Commissioners present were in agreement.

Ms. Bakalar further stated that she has been working with Nancy Kuhn to establish a Cottage Industry Home-Based Business Event for which many of the preparations were completed pre-COVID-19. She noted that she is hoping to set a date for November but is hesitant to do so this far in advance because of the fickle nature of the pandemic, adding that the event will be scheduled for Spring of 2022 if deemed necessary.

## **Opportunity for Community Input**

No comments.

## **Adjournment**

Vice Chairman Kaufman adjourned the special meeting of the Economic and Community Development Commission at 7:57pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo  
ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi  
Doug Wenz