

**Town of Trumbull**  
**Economic and Community Development Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 14, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Virtual Meeting – Zoom Videoconferencing**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission (ECDC) of the Town of Trumbull was held via videoconferencing on September 14, 2021.

**Attendance**

**Members Present:**     Ralph Sather (Chairman)  
                                  Beryl Kaufman (Vice Chairman)  
                                  Marshall Marcus  
                                  Shelby LeVino  
                                  Karen DelVecchio  
                                  Ted Chase  
                                  Evelyn Zamary

**Members Absent:**     Eric Michel

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

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

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Approval of June 8, 2021 Minutes**

A motion to approve the June 8, 2021 ECDC meeting minutes was made by Vice Chairman Kaufman and seconded by Commissioner Zamary. The motion carried unanimously. *(Commissioner Marcus was not present for this vote.)*

There were no amendments made to the August 10, 2021 meeting minutes.

**Chairman’s Report**

There was no report from Chairman Sather. He thanked everyone for their attendance.

**Director’s Report**

**Business Update:**

Ms. Rina Bakalar stated that Hawley Lane Mall had been granted the necessary permits to begin establishing a 7,000 square foot shared office space for which work is progressing nicely.

Ms. Bakalar reported that The Guacamole Grill is planned to open in December in the space previously occupied by Wahlburgers in the Trumbull Westfield Mall. She noted that this will be the town's first full-service Mexican restaurant in many years, adding that the chain is family-owned by experienced restaurateurs.

Ms. Bakalar stated that Ecco at Long Hill Market originally planned to open this September but due to a variety of issues they will most likely open in November. Work is well underway.

The director notified the ECDC that she is currently working to establish a ribbon cutting event in October for the newly opened businesses in the Long Hill Market.

Ms. Bakalar informed members that the Elite Program, servicing upperclassman high school students and young adults (up to age 22) with special needs looking to advance their job skills, will be opening the Elite Bookstore and Café in Trumbull Center above Giove's. Ms. Bakalar noted her excitement for the students and for Trumbull Center as she feels the business will be a destination.

Ms. Bakalar mentioned that the Bridgeport Regional Business Council (BRBC) will conduct its annual Business Showcase on Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> and encouraged commissioners to direct interested parties to the BRBC website for additional information.

Ms. Bakalar shared an update on the Trumbull Local Meals Program for which the town received a \$200,000 grant, stating that the program has provided well over 1,000 meals (~18% of initial funding) to roughly 120 residents in partnership with 10 restaurants. She commended Trumbull's Long Term Recovery Committee for its efforts in establishing this program as well as Commissioner Marshall Marcus for having seeded the idea. The director revealed that participating restaurants are reporting \$500 to \$11,000 of additional business per month through this program, noting the importance of this revenue in regards to business recovery costs and customer acquisition. Based on these figures, she projected that approximately 40-50% of the program funding will be spent by the end of December, adding that she intends to seek additional funding at that point. Ms. Bakalar cited the program's continuous improvement model as cornerstone of success, adding that several other communities have shown interest in spurring a similar initiative in their area. Lastly, she requested assistance from commissioners in attaining additional restaurant participation.

The director reported that the town is not planning to conduct Restaurant Week this year due to ongoing COVID-19 recovery efforts.

#### Community Development Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that the Westfield Trumbull Mall received final approval from OSTA at the beginning of September to proceed with the proposed housing development. The developer is working to schedule a closing date with the Mall. Once such date is determined, there will be a ground breaking ceremony scheduled.

Ms. Bakalar reported that Ten Trumbull, the new housing development on the corner of Oakview Drive and Lindeman Drive, has reached full occupancy.

Ms. Bakalar also shared that the Woodside Trumbull property has received 113 certificates of occupancy and has subsequently leased all of its available units, though building is still underway.

Ms. Bakalar stated that the town recently received results from their inquiry into the number of additional school age children resulting from these two new housing developments in Trumbull. According to the data, which roughly aligns with projections from both the Board of Education and the developer, Ten Trumbull, with 202 units, has 27 school age children and four pre-school children currently. Woodside Trumbull, with 113 units, has ten school age children and two pre-school age children. Children residing in multi-family units can be sent to whatever school the Board of Education deems appropriate. At this time, students from these developments in elementary school are attending Jane Ryan Elementary School.

#### Planning Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that First Selectman Vicki Tesoro and she recently met with Senator Moore to discuss the funding they received for the Trumbull Westfield Mall Planning Study, adding that 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. More will be reported at the October meeting.

The director informed the Commission that discussions regarding the Trumbull Center Planning Study are ongoing, adding that there is still time to send their thoughts to Rob Librandi, Land Use Planner, and have them considered in the discussion process.

#### Grant Update:

Ms. Bakalar stated that there are currently a number of grant submissions under consideration for the Veterans and First Responder Center including submissions to the member driven community projects funding via our federal Senate offices.

Ms. Bakalar informed the Commission of the likely onslaught of competitive grant programs in the near future resulting from the American Rescue Plan funding and possible Transportation Bill. She stated that First Selectman Vicki Tesoro wants to ensure that Trumbull is well positioned to receive some of this potential funding so she is exploring additional capacity for grant work.

#### Event Update:

Ms. Bakalar shared information on the Commercial Broker Lunch-In scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and encouraged commissioners to share the details of the event with any relevant parties who may be interested in attending. She noted that the event will be conducted indoors utilizing a large space that allows for social distancing. She went on to state that, in addition to the regularly discussed business topics, there will be a focus on redevelopment efforts and planned improvement projects in the Reservoir/Oakview/Lindeman Drive area.

Ms. Bakalar stated that there is a public launch event scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at that Make-A-Wish Foundation which requires an RSVP for attendance. She noted that she is helping with press and media efforts for the event. She previously sent the invite to commissioners. She will resend as only Commissioner Kaufman has RSVP's so far.

Ms. Bakalar also stated that the Annual Business Appreciation Breakfast is scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the Trumbull Marriott which was kind enough to offer a larger room at no additional cost to allow for social distancing. She encouraged commissioners to reach out to people within their network about this event, adding that she will distribute invitations on Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Bakalar then thanked Commissioner Ted Chase for connecting her with the event's Keynote Speaker Stephen Andrews, senior V.P. and chief economist at Webster Bank.

### **Opportunity for Community Input**

No public comment.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:03p.m. by Commissioner DelVecchio and seconded by Vice Chairman Kaufman. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo  
ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi  
Doug Wenz