

Town of Trumbull
Economic and Community Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 7, 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 March 7, 2023.

Attendance

Members Present: Beryl Kaufman (Chairman)
Karen DelVecchio (Vice Chairman)
Marshall Marcus
Ralph Sather
Fred Petrossi
Massimo Mallozzi
Terrence Griffiths

Members Absent: Evelyn Zamarly (Secretary)

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 7:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of February 7, 2023 Minutes

A motion to approve the February 7, 2023 minutes was made by Commissioner Mallozzi and seconded by Vice Chairman DelVecchio. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman asked Ms. Bakalar to speak to the timelines regarding the sidewalk improvements planned for Whitney Avenue.

Director's Report

Business Update:

The Director stated that there was an article in the CT Post on March 1st regarding the opening of Golftec, a business newly located at 6540 Main Street. She noted that there has been some press staff transitions regarding the local coverage of Trumbull.

In November of 2022, Trumbull Center LCC received approval for an overlay zone in Trumbull Center to allow for mixed-use development in the area. Subsequently, they have filed an application to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for said area, which will be

heard in the coming months. Director Bakalar encouraged interested Commissioners to attend the hearing(s) and suggested they contact William Maurer, Town Engineer, or Tatiana Solovey, Assistant Town Engineer, with any questions regarding the application.

Transpak, an international packaging firm for manufacturing industry, is moving to 120 Corporate Drive where they will occupy the entire building. Ms. Bakalar recently has directed them to a new federal grant program pertaining to semi-conductor packaging.

Fire and Dice is re-locating within Hawley Lane Mall to a larger, more permanent location. Ms. Bakalar hopes to conduct a ribbon-cutting event to welcome the unique gaming business once the new space is open. She informed that several other businesses have shown interest in joining that Mall.

Paul's Hair Cutters is moving back to Trumbull from Monroe. They will be moving into the space next to Parker's Steak and Scotch in Trumbull Center. Ms. Bakalar informed that the dumpsters behind the former Fairfield County Bank building are associated with building renovations being done by the tenant, Hartford Healthcare. This location will offer services similar to that of their other Trumbull location in a larger, more nuanced space.

Community Development Update:

The Gateway Commons project on the Trumbull / Monroe Town Line recently received all the necessary approvals through the Trumbull Planning and Zoning Commission and are now working to finalize similar approvals through the Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission(s). There is still considerable work to be done to prepare the site before construction begins.

The Town is currently working through two separate bid processes to select a team for the sidewalk and intersections improvements planned for the Long Hill Green area. Per the CT Department of Transportation (DOT), said infrastructure improvements need to occur in conjunction with one another, following a specific phasing path to ensure pedestrian safety.

Grant Update:

The Town won grant funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Fund (NFWF) to complete the green infrastructure project in Long Hill Green (in front of Fryborg and Abi's Falafel), phase one of which completed in fall of 2019. The Town has engaged a consultant to design phase two of the project and is working to finalize their contract with the NFWF before going to bid with the plans. Ms. Bakalar and the Long Hill Green Team are organizing a community meeting (requested by First Selectman Tesoro) to provide updates and timelines on the various work to be done in the area. This meeting will occur in late April or early May.

The Director finalized a grant submission this past Tuesday for CT DEEP Recreational Trail grant in an effort to obtain the funds needed to complete the trail connection on Whitney Avenue, from the corner of Dun Ellen Road to the Whitney Avenue Trail Head. She noted that all five CT legislative delegation members signed a letter of support. This project will provide needed safety improvements and increase pedestrian access to the commercial area.

Many of the improvements planned for Route 111 (near Prime One Eleven) to ready the area for the traffic signal have been completed. The traffic light equipment, which has been received, will be installed in spring as well as a portion of the sidewalk and driveway changes at Woodland Hills.

Commissioner Marcus asked whether the State is requiring cameras at all new traffic lights installed. Ms. Bakalar stated she would look further into this, noting that she does not believe that to be a requirement.

Planning Update:

The Director encouraged Commissioners to take the community survey on housing needs in Trumbull which will close on March 12th. The link to the survey can be accessed through the Town website. This survey is meant to help garner insights on community perspectives regarding housing needs and strategies. This survey is part of a State mandated effort for the Town to create an affordable housing plan. The affordable housing plan is not linked to any housing development project past, present, or future. There are community meetings for this effort on March 22nd at 6:30p.m. in Town Hall Council Chambers and Mary 3rd at 6:30p.m. via Zoom. The Director asked the Commission to help spread awareness for said events.

Ms. Bakalar noted that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 2023-2050, shared with Commissioners, identifies opportunities to improve mobility for all people and businesses through the Greater Bridgeport and Valley planning region. The Governor has recommended public bus transit enhancements for Trumbull which would help to increase the frequency of Bus 19 through Trumbull Center, providing more feasible transportation for pedestrians and employees. The Director encouraged Commissioners to share their thoughts on the effort through correspondence with CT legislators or the governor himself.

The Trumbull Mall Area Market Feasibility and Land Use study is underway. The consultants hired for this effort have begun conducting interviews with key stakeholders in the area. As this effort continues, there will be community meetings to involve the larger public in the process.

The Director noted the article shared with the Commission from UCONN College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources which highlights the green infrastructure improvements to the Long Hill Green area.

Event Update:

There is a Cyber Security Readiness event planned for April 27th from 8:00a.m. to 10:00a.m. at Kyber Security, 75 Merritt Boulevard. The Director thanked Commissions Petrossi and Mallozzi for their assistance organizing the event as well as Town staff, the BRBC, CT SBDC, Kyber Security, Crown Castle, and Gallagher Insurance. She asked that Commissioners help to grow awareness for the event.

The Director thanked Commissioner Petrossi and the Trumbull Chamber of Commerce for hosting their recent after hour's event at Emma's Restaurant which was a tremendous success and an excellent way of supporting a local business.

The Director is working to finalize staffing efforts for the Department. Chairman Kaufman stated she recently met the new Zoning Enforcement Officer, Brian Fitzgerald, by whom she was very impressed. Ms. Bakalar stated him to be a true asset to the Town.

Commissioner Sather stated that he has continued to get questions about the “old Starbucks building” and its demolition. Ms. Bakalar informed that such action would not occur until the property owner has a decision on the new development plans proposed for the property. She noted that the property owners have assessed their ability to remove the existing structures and still hope to do so, but they are not prepared to do so without a decision on the re-development plan. Furthermore, one of the three buildings was built prior to 1940 and must go through a demolition delay process. Commissioner Sather noted approximately 15 people asking him about this matter. Ms. Bakalar stated that she would be happy to speak to anyone inquiring about the demolition and the property. Commissioner Sather repeated his statement from a previous meeting that he felt misinformed and felt the building was slated to come down as soon as the other businesses moved across the street. Ms. Bakalar stated that she did not recall any timeline associated with the discussion and that plans and timelines for all projects are subject to change.

Commissioner Marcus stated it is important that Commissions be aware that the roll of the ECD Commission is to be an advisory board not a regulatory board. He added that, unless there was an explicit contingency stated in the approvals for the current Starbucks / CVS building mandating that the old structures (across the street) be torn down, all plans showing said removal are in no way obligatory. He further stated that the Commission and Town regularly see plans proposed that do not come to fruition and emphasized that Commissioners should not be making definitive statements about projects that have not received formal approvals.

Sustainable Trumbull Update

Commissioner Sather brought up again that the Sustainable Trumbull Team would like to include an excerpt about their One Thousand Trees for Trumbull program and other activities in the branded ECD newsletter. Ms. Bakalar noted that while she would like to get that back up and running she has not had the capacity to do so yet. She is using a newsflash feature of the town website to communicate with business all the resources and information that benefits them.

Commissioner Sather noted the audience he was seeking was residents. Ms. Bakalar noted her list was primarily businesses. Commissioner Sather referenced a print/paper newsletter. Ms. Bakalar noted that a paper printed newsletter had not been in place since Debra Cox was the ECD. She stated that the best way to have the requested information reach residents would be through the general blast.

Director Bakalar informed that community development, as defined through her profession and is positions such as she holds, has to do with housing diversification, infrastructure that supports quality of life, and physical amenities and projects that support the overall connection between commerce and community assets creating opportunity. This work is done with input from the community such as meetings, surveys, etc.

BRBC Update

Commissioner Petrossi had no new updates on the BRBC at this time.

The Chair asked whether Commissioners were open to conducting in-person meetings in the future. It was decided that the April 4th meeting would be conducted via Zoom with the intent to further discuss this matter as spring approaches.

Opportunity for Community Input

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

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:14p.m. by Commissioner Marcus and seconded by Vice Chairman DelVecchio. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo
ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi