

Town of Trumbull
Economic and Community Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2022 – 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 5, 2022.

Attendance

Members Present: Beryl Kaufman - Chairman
Karen DelVecchio - Vice Chairman
Evelyn Zamary - Secretary
Marshall Marcus
Justin Scheuble

Members Absent: Shelby LeVino
Ralph Sather

Also Present: Rina Bakalar – Director of Economic & Community Development
William Chin – Director of Information Technology
Dan Onofrio – President & CEO of Bridgeport Regional Business Council
Executive Director of Trumbull Chamber of Commerce
Gia Mentillo – Economic & Community Development Clerk

Chairman Kaufman called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of March 1, 2022 Minutes

A motion to approve the March 1, 2022 minutes was made by Commissioner Scheuble and seconded by Commissioner Zamary. The motion carried unanimously. *Vice Chairman DelVecchio abstained, noting her absence from the meeting.*

Chairman’s Report

Chairman Kaufman stated that the grand opening of the Next Chapter Bookstore was excellent, noting that donations for the bookstore should be sent to Trumbull High School. Commissioner Zamary shared that she visited Next Chapter Bookstore separately and signed up as a volunteer.

Director’s Report

Business Update:

Ms. Bakalar noted another new business coming to the Trumbull Corporate Park, Studio 35 owned by Trumbull resident Eric VanStone.

Ms. Bakalar also discussed the area around Lindeman Drive and the significant revitalization that has occurred there over the past 5 to 6 years. A significant portion of the vacant space in the area has been re-occupied by businesses including Synergy Home Care (relocated from Fairfield to 12 Cambridge Drive) and Nephrology Associates (relocated from Bridgeport to 7 Cambridge Drive). She discussed the status of the property at 6 Cambridge Drive, which has been a consistent source of blight for the Town due to its continuous decline resulting from lack of maintenance. The town was pursuing foreclosure action. Positive news is that the property has gone under contract for sale. The potential buyer is focused on a productive use that is NOT housing. Ms. Bakalar emphasized that the redevelopment of this site would result in the majority of the neighborhood being reoccupied, redeveloped, and reactivated, noting that the area is slated for paving in 2023.

The opening of Pure Skin Med Spa in Trumbull Center is imminent, and the Next Chapter Bookstore had its grand opening on March 23rd. Guacamole Grill will open in the Trumbull Mall once its liquor permit is approved by the State.

Director Bakalar drafted the final report on the Main Street Dollars program which she informed was a success, adding that she intends to conduct a second pilot program utilizing the remaining funds from the grant.

Commissioner Marcus informed that Cigar and Tobacco publicized that they are open for business and that the CT Post did a piece on the Pure Skin Med Spa.

Event Update:

School Days Preschool was awarded “Top Preschool of Fairfield County 2022” for which there is a celebratory event planned at 3115 Reservoir Avenue on April 12th at 9:00am.

The Virtual Staffing Resource Event conducted on March 31st went well and has been viewed by nearly 200 people on Facebook thus far. The presentation and recording of the event will be posted to the Town website and partners from the event have been encouraged to share the resources with their network.

There will be an event for local home-based businesses on June 8th at Jeff Works in Hawley Lane Mall from 8:30am to 1:00pm. Chairman Kaufman asked if it would be an expo style event, and Director Bakalar stated that she would take that into consideration. Chairman Kaufman, Vice Chairman DelVecchio, and Commissioner Scheuble volunteered to participate in the planning of the event.

Ms. Bakalar noted that Trumbull will host the Fairfield County Commercial Broker Network Luncheon on July 25th this year, potentially at Trumbull Westfield Mall.

The Town will be organizing a Restaurant Week this year for which Director Bakalar has begun forming a planning team of 6-8 people which she hopes members from both the Economic & Community Development Commission (ECDC) and Trumbull Chamber of Commerce (TCC)

will consider joining. Vice Chairman DelVecchio and Commissioner Zamary volunteered to join the team.

Community Development Update:

There are no applications for the Planning and Zoning Commission's (PZC) May meeting.

The Director informed that questions regarding the Unity Road proposal should be directed to Rob Librandi, Trumbull Land Use Planner, adding that the proposal, as shown during the February PZC meeting, was simply a pre-application review and there are no formal applications or requests thus far.

Planning Update:

The traffic light on Monroe Turnpike has been completely approved by the State and is currently out to bid with a bid due date of April 14th. Once a contractor is selected the project will begin.

The Trumbull Center Corridor Plan was presented during the March 16th PZC meeting and will be utilized as a road map for pursuing funding for improvement of the area.

Director Bakalar stated that the Town is still waiting for the contract for the grant funding from the state in order to go out to bid for the market feasibility and planning study intended for the Trumbull Westfield Mall area.

Grant Update:

The Town received its first grant for the Trumbull Veterans and First Responders Center (TVFRC) in the amount of \$1.5 million construction bonding request. The Town is also applying for the Federal Member Driven Community Project funding through both the House of Representatives and the Senate. First Selectman Tesoro has set up a meeting with the key staff from the CT Congressional Office in hopes of refining the application and working to address escalated construction costs at this time. Federal grant applications are due to both the House of Representatives and the Senate on April 18th for which the Town welcomes letter of support.

Commissioner Marcus stated that there was funding listed in the Town budget for a Grant Writer. The Director informed that the funds are to hire someone on a part-time basis to increase the Town's capacity to respond to the upcoming onslaught of grant opportunities from the federal and state levels of government. She provided an overview of the various steps involved in the grant writing and receiving process.

Opportunity for Community Input

There was no public comment made.

Final Note

Dan Onofrio thanked the Commission for including him on the meeting and informed that the BRBC will be hosting a breakfast for First Selectman Vicki A. Tesoro on May 11th at Tashua Knolls which he invited Commissioners to attend.

Chairman Kaufman asked Onofrio if the BRBC creates and distributes quarterly reports. He stated that there are typically annual reports, informing that the BRBC hopes to have one created in June which will come in the form of the “BRBC Region Magazine.”

Commissioner Marcus asked Bill Chin if it was possible to enable a chat feature for ECDC meetings, and Mr. Chin informed that the Town decided to disable that feature for public meetings.

Chairman Kaufman informed that future ECDC meetings will need to be conducted in-person at Trumbull Town Hall because the state order allowing virtual meetings terminates at the end of April 2022. The Director informed she is seeking guidance on this matter.

Vice Chairman DelVecchio stated that the Trumbull Rotary Club is conducting a day of caring on April 10th during which they will be collecting non-perishable food donations at Crown Street Pizza from 9am to 3pm. The Commission stated they would work to share information on the event.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:46p.m. by Commissioner Marcus and seconded by Vice Chairman DelVecchio. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gia Mentillo
ECDC Clerk

Cc: Rob Librandi
Doug Wenz