

Town of Trumbull
Economic and Community Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 6, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.
Electronic Meeting-Zoom

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Economic & Community Development Commission of the Town of Trumbull was held via videoconferencing on April 6, 2021.

The Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance

Members Present: Ralph Sather - Chairman, Beryl Kaufman - Vice Chairman, Marshall Marcus, Shelby LeVino and Karen DeVecchio, Ted Chase.

Members Absent: Eric Michel, Evelyn Zamarly

Also Present: Rina Bakalar - Director of Economic and Community Development
William Chin - Director of Information Technology
Jen Record – Impact Trumbull

Chairman Sather called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Chairman's Report: Chairman Sather led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the February 2, 2021 minutes was made by Commissioner Kaufman and seconded by Commissioner Marcus. The motion carried unanimously.

Data Base:

Chairman Sather gave his recollection of the excel database that was developed when Debra Cox was Economic Development Director. Rina Bakalar explained how out of date the database was when she arrived since it had been only minimally updated after Ms. Cox left. It had under a few hundred viable contacts and many were board and commission members. Ms. Bakalar discussed all the cleaning to that data base and the ongoing additions to the database. She discussed other sub lists that she uses to communicate to commercial brokers and restaurants. The database has upwards of 1,000 contacts. Ms. Bakalar explained the economic development subscriber list as a supplemental list that anyone can join via the website. These lists work fine and over 102 updates went out last year. The only time there is any issue is when we are looking for a highly customized list. Bill Chin offered to assist to develop further columns for sorting at a point in the future. Commissioners LeVino and Chase offered to assist as well. Ms. Bakalar will get the group together at a point in the future when time allows

and the new clerk is assimilated. Ms. Bakalar does not feel this is an immediate priority but will be nice for the future.

Branding of Reservoir/Lindeman Avenue Area:

Chairman Sather wanted to know the status of the branding of the area. Ms. Bakalar noted it has not been a top priority due to COVID and the business needs that presented. She explained the IL2-PLAN was complete and on the Planning and Zoning page of the website. She reminded the Commission that a presentation of that plan to the broker community was scheduled to be held in March of 2020. It was rescheduled until May 2020 and then cancelled until further notice. This event would present that plan to the community as a road map and enticement for investment in the area. Contained within that plan was the early feedback from stakeholder meetings on branding of the area. She noted much more extensive feedback and communication with the community is required in order to develop an identity and brand name for the area. Ms. Bakalar suggested the Commission take this up as a project. Rob Librandi, town planner and herself would help set up meetings with the First Selectman's office to discuss. Given the amount of pressing priorities, it is impossible for staff to take this up this year, but the Commission may want to take on the effort. Chairman Sather suggested he issue an email to each Commission member separately to solicit input.

Impact Trumbull:

Jen Record, Director of Impact Trumbull briefed the Commission on a recent initiative "Gratitude is Contagious: Spreading Support throughout Trumbull in 2021". Ms. Record was able to raise approximately \$27,000 in order for each public school employee, including bus drivers, aids, teachers, etc. to receive a twenty-dollar gift card to a Trumbull restaurant. The goal is to appreciate the Board of Education staff and efforts and to support Trumbull restaurants given all they have been through. Ms. Record thanked Ms. Bakalar for linking her to the various contacts who contributed the funds. Ms. Record noted Newtown Savings Bank, Trumbull Center (DiNardo's/ Aiello Foundation), Ten Trumbull, Woodside, Residents on Main were among the contributors. Their contributions and commitment to the community were noted.

Director's Report

Business Update:

Ms. Bakalar informed that a new clerk (Gia Mentillo) has been hired and she is getting up to speed quickly. She will clerk next month's meeting.

Ms. Bakalar noted that Marianna's Pantry will open in the former Mex on Main space in Long Hill Green. Melissa Cotto, a Trumbull restaurant has a wonderful breakfast, lunch and pantry concept. The Long Hill Market Plaza is 85% leased. Businesses will begin opening in May. Ms. Bakalar submitted an update article to the Senior Center newsletter.

A 20th Anniversary, Grand Re-opening is scheduled for Tobukan Martial Arts at 100 Corporate Drive on Saturday, May 1 at 1pm. Ms. Bakalar urged Commission members to attend and support this long time business.

Community Development Update:

Ms. Bakalar noted the preliminary report on the new multi-family housing that is under development for Planning and Zoning. She noted the school age children numbers for Ten Trumbull, which is 100%, occupied at 34. Rob Librandi is trying to gather data on how many of those children were already in the Trumbull Public Schools and how many are attending private schools. Ms. Bakalar further noted that Woodside has leased 50 units so far, mostly 2-bedrooms and to date, 3 school age children will be living in those units. Ms. Bakalar also suggested Commission members read on the website, the testimony First Selectman Tesoro has submitted on several bill effecting property taxes, affordable housing and local zoning matters.

Planning Update:

First Selectman Tesoro and Ms. Bakalar are working diligently to raise significant funds to launch a world class planning effort for the Westfield Trumbull Mall area. Ms. Bakalar is developing the Scope of Work on a parallel track, which will be used to procure a consulting team. Ms. Bakalar noted this will go beyond a traditional municipal land use plan and include an economic and market analysis to support the long-term transformation and vibrancy of the area.

Ms. Bakalar also noted they Trumbull Center Corridor Plan is getting underway with Rob Librandi supporting the kick-off of the effort with the consulting team. The Trumbull Center Project Team is also meeting monthly to facilitate short and long-term improvements to the area on a parallel track. Ms. Bakalar noted that a redevelopment plan for a portion of Trumbull Center is expected in the coming months.

Grant Update:

Ms. Bakalar updated the Commission on the delay for the Local Meals program. The delay is for good reason, First Selectman Tesoro and Ms. Bakalar asked for an additional \$100,000 for a total now of \$200,000 for the program which will support our restaurants and residents in need. The contract had to be changed to reflect the larger allocation which is causing a delay but the need is still great.

Ms. Bakalar also noted an upcoming submission to the Member Directed Community Project program for the Veterans and First Responder Center through Congressman Hime's Office. She noted First Selectman Tesoro had coordinated several meetings with Congressman Hime's staff to let them know we were applying for the funds and she coordinated a meeting with Senators Blumenthal and Murphy's offices for support. The \$2,970,000 submission is due on April 9. Ms. Bakalar asked the Commission to consider voting this evening on a letter of support for the grant. Commissioner Marcus felt this was a very good idea, as did Chairman Sather.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaufman and seconded by Commissioner DeVecchio to submit a letter of support for the Member Directed Community Project program on behalf of the Trumbull Veterans and First Responder Center. During discussion, a motion to amend the original motion was offered by Commissioner Marcus to allow Ms. Bakalar to draft and circulate the letter to the Commission; Commissioner LeVino seconded the amendment. The motion to amend passed unanimously. Then a vote to approve the original motion as amended passed unanimously.

Event Update:

The Commission discussed the Annual Breakfast and agreed an in-person gathering is preferred but not until the fall. The Commission agreed to continue to evaluate potential dates and conditions over the next few meetings.

Chairman Sather reiterated that if Commissioners have items they would like on the agenda, they should reach out to Ms. Bakalar and himself. He also noted that if Commissioners have questions, they should reach out to Ms. Bakalar between meetings.

Community Input- There was no community input.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:49 pm by Commissioner Kaufman and seconded by Commissioner DeVecchio. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rina Bakalar

ECD Director

cc: Rob Librandi, Doug Wenz