



TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
Economic & Community Development Department
2750 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut 06518

Dale Kroop, Director

Town of Hamden
Economic Development Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, **March 12, 2013** in the **Third Floor Conference Room at the Hamden Government Center, 2750 Dixwell Avenue, at 5:30PM**

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Sachetti, Mr. DelGrego, Mr. Zambrano, Ms. Borrelli, Mr. DeNicola, Mr. Rolnick, Mr. Moses

Excused Absence: Mr. Diaz, Mr. Inzero

Others Absent: Ms. Giannini

Others in Attendance: Mayor Jackson, Economic & Community Development Director Kroop, Community Development Program Manager Marchand, Commission Clerk Tobin

Guests: Leigh Small (Alphabet Academy), Andrew Small, Frank Gasparo (Energy Use & Climate Change Commission), Frederick Schramm (Energy Use & Climate Change Commission), Gina Koslowski (REX Development), Beth Cantor (Calcagni Real Estate), Jessica Bailey (CEFIA), Tony Rossley (Quinnipiac Bank & Trust), Rachel Gretencord (Connecticut Economic Resource Center-CERC), Pete Aufdemorte (United Illuminating), Abdul Hamid (Islamic Center of Hamden), Mike Doucette (United Illuminating)

1. Call to order
Mr. Sachetti called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Reading and Approval of minutes of January 8, 2013
Mr. Sachetti requested a motion to approve the January 8th meeting minutes. **Mr. DelGrego made a motion to accept the minutes of**

January 8th as submitted. Mr. Zambrano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Mr. Sachetti welcomed the attendees to the first in the Commission's speaker series.

3. Speaker: C-PACE Energy Program For Businesses

Mr. Kroop said everyone is aware of the success of our work. The current C. B. Ellis report shows Hamden has lowest vacancy rate in the region in office, commercial and manufacturing space. An article regarding this will be published shortly, showing how the Commission's programs and business incentives work. The focus of these programs is to assist Hamden businesses so they can thrive, grow, and remain in Hamden. We do this through lots of relationships and partnerships such as REX Development, the Hamden Chamber of Commerce, United Illuminating, etc.

Mr. Kroop introduced commissioner Sherry Borrelli. Ms. Borrelli introduced Roy Haller, Director of Commercial Industrial programs at United Illuminating who conducted a slide program "Energy Efficiency Programs for Hamden Businesses. He described the state's new branding, energize Connecticut, which is an initiative to help businesses save money and use clean affordable energy. Mr. Haller said this is a long term energy efficiency strategy looking ahead 50 years. Mr. Kroop will be able to use the slides for presentations, or ask a UI representative to assist with presentations.

Jessica Bailey Works for the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority which was set up by the Governor and Legislature of Connecticut in 2011. CEFIA/C-Pace provides low cost loans for energy upgrades, which are repaid through property tax assessments. Should a bankruptcy occur, repayment of these loans would come immediately after the taxes on the property and before the mortgage. The mortgage holder would be a signatory on the agreement. They have created a financial product in which capital is flowing into this state, because energy upgrades are a public benefit. Energy costs must go down more than the property tax will go up because of these incentives to make the program viable.

Ms. Bailey said the C-Pace program is best suited for six figure upgrades. Small programs should go through United Illuminating. Contact UI early for alternatives. UI works with the C-Pace review team.

Mr. Kroop said he would like to have this presentation for the Legislative Council members and the Tax Collector in order for them

to understand how this program can benefit Hamden. Ms. Bailey agreed that the C-Pace slides can be used by Mr. Kroop for presentations. Mr. Sacchetti thanked the speakers for their presentations.

4. Old Business:

Mr. Kroop said this is the 1st week of the speaker series, and is about energy incentive programs. The public is invited to all of the series. Other programs are: April 9th, SBA Financing and May 14th Workforce Development Grants for training in technology and health care. On June 11th there will be a session on health care for businesses. Last week Steve Diaz and his colleagues held a session on training grants for manufacturers.

Mr. Kroop announced a new business series from Richard Pearce and the Business Assistance Center offering technical assistance to small businesses. Mr. Pearce has served more than 230 clients. In 2009, Mr. Pearce did a series on how to run and operate a business. That series will start on April 3rd. All of this information is available on the web site and the facebook page.

The Town will be going forward with a Buy Hamden strategy which will culminate in a new ordinance to encourage the use of Hamden businesses for Town projects. If a Hamden business comes in with a higher bid than the low bidder, the Hamden business will have the opportunity to meet the low bid. Krista is doing a feature on SNP, Prakash 's company. We will be doing a lot more on the Buy Hamden strategy.

5. New Business:

The Hamden Chamber of Commerce Business Expo will be held on Saturday, April 13th at Hamden High School from 11:00 a.m. To 4:00 p.m.

The Hamden Chamber Golf Tournament will be held on June 5th with an emphasis on charitable giving.

Mr. Kroop reported that Planet Fitness has moved to the Hamden Plaza. Both the Plaza and the Mart are at 100% occupancy. The Home Depot Plaza is almost at 100%. Our challenge is to fill the gaps. We must also make sure that real estate brokers take their signs down 30 days after a property is leased or sold. We have to create more inventory and attack less desirable sites. There are a few blighted commercial properties in Town. A new business is going in to the former Planet Fitness site on a lease. Mr. Kroop reported that funeral homes continue to look at the SBC site. Chipotle will be opening soon in the GAP plaza.

Planet Fitness and The Edge have created a lot of complaints from people who want to go to Bon Ton and other stores because of parking issues. Also, because The Edge is so crowded, people are going back to LA Fitness.

We still have some inventory, but very little. The article that Krista put out today has good information on where the market is in this town. The Commission should be proud of its efforts.

Neil Welch and Eli Drazen sold the two medical buildings on Whitney Avenue. Dr. Rawlins got his building 100% leased, and sold it to an investor and is now a tenant in the building.

Mr. Kroop said for \$50 he got a list from the Secretary of State's Office of all types of corporations except sole proprietors in Hamden. When he last checked, there were 4,300 entities, this time he found 5,200 entities in Hamden. If you take out non profits, churches, and other entities that don't count as businesses, there are still 4,000 businesses in Hamden. Some of these are home businesses, that might move out of homes and into the commercial spaces, hopefully in Hamden. 80% of these businesses are LLCs.

6. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

Regarding the dentist's loan - the mayor has signed, but the lease is not signed yet.

Mather Street is status quo.

Himmel Brothers is complicated.

The Old Middle School - an RFP was issued for the study of the the environmental conditions of the school. Interviews will be held in two weeks. We will finally have real information when the problems inside the building (asbestos tile, mercury light switches, pcb's in caulking, old boilers with friable asbestos) are identified. In the context of 164,000 sf, what will the cost of remediation be. Does this building glow in the dark? The 2002 study is outdated. A price for demolition was also requested. If the cost of remediation is \$1 million, and cost of demolition is \$5 million, it will help in making a decision. The selection of a firm from the proposals will be made by Mr. Kroop, Town Engineer Brinton and the Finance Director. All bids came in lower than \$100,000. Four of the six firms that submitted proposals will be interviewed. Mr. Moses asked what it costs the Town to manage the Middle School building in its present condition. Mr. Kroop replied it is not very high. The boilers have been shut down. With the heat on it was costing about

\$250,000 per year. Currently expenses are for Public Works to mow the lawn, board up windows, etc. The Town is self insured.

Reporter Fred Nevin is doing a big feature on Economic Development in Hamden for his paper. Mr. Kroop has written an article.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Moses made a motion to adjourn. Mr. DelGrego seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
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