



**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, June 11, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center.

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Sachetti, Mr. Rolnick, Ms. Borelli, Ms. Gretencord, Mr. Del Grego, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Diaz, Ms. Giannini, Mr. DeNicola

Guests: Mr. Walter, Mr. Bakus, Quinnipiac Presidential Fellow Ashley Alcott, Kristin Daniels, Beth Gallagher, Shawn LeFrancois, James Brewster, Harold and Pam Bosward, Ron Sparks, Ed Grant, David and Barbara Cooper, Marty Mador

Others in Attendance: Economic & Community Development Director Dale Kroop, Commission Clerk Gerry Tobin

1. Call to order 5:30

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

2. Reading and Approval of minutes from the previous meeting

**Mr. Rolnick made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Gretencord seconded the motion. Mr. Zambrano and Mr. DelGrego abstained. The vote was seven in favor.**

3. Speaker – Energize Hamden

Sherrie Borelli of United Illuminating and Southern Connecticut Gas spoke about a pilot program starting in Hamden by the utility companies, the Town of Hamden, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and CEFIA. Home Energy Solutions is a flagship weatherization, energy efficiency and gas conversion program. Homeowners and business owners are eligible if their property is located on a gas main or within 150 feet of a gas main. The Town has solicited insulation contractors through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process to work with residents in conjunction with the Home Energy Solutions program. They will do an assessment of the home and provide weatherstripping, light bulbs, etc. They are working with the community, and each vendor will contribute to the community fund. Hamden also issued an RFP for HVAC contractors, and that RFP is closing next week. They are hoping to drive demand and reduce costs, rebates, warranties, in order to offer residents best price available, based on participation and interest. Utilities are sending out mailers to potential candidates. Financing is available through the utility companies and

Connecticut Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority (CEFIA). They are also working with a third party outreach organization that will knock on doors, speak at events and form neighborhood block parties, in order to solicit participants and spread the word.

Bob Walter is working with the community through the original Clean Energy Program. They will partner with local lending institutions. They have two new products, a Smart You loan, partnering with credit unions and community banks across the state. This is a flexible tool that allows you to do a wide range of energy conversions. Various terms and interest rates are available and this program allows participation with lower scores. They also have Cozy loans aimed at low and moderate income families. These programs are structured so the customer can start saving money from month one. Another benefit is that any actions taken by residents or businesses earn points for Hamden to earn rewards. Mr. Walter mentioned the solar arrays at the Keefe Center and Middle School which were earned through points. They are asking citizens to help spread the word. Sign-ups must be completed by September 15<sup>th</sup> and work must be completed by December 31, 2013.

Mr. Bosworth said he lives 200' from end of the gas main. Ms. Borelli said a sales representative will contact him. Mr. Kroop said they have received many calls from people who live further than 150 feet from the gas main. Ms. Borelli said every opportunity should be looked at but they might not all work out.

Mr. DeGrego asked if contractors will study the heat loss. Ms. Borelli said the contractors will outline opportunities.

Mr. Walter said there are flexible loan rates and terms, varying from 4.49% for short terms to 6.99% for 12 year terms. The contractor will work with the customer and lending institution. This is a streamlined process. 20% of the loan can be used for non-conversion expense (i. e. asbestos, mold, etc.) The objective is to make clean, healthy homes. The term of the loan is based on comfortable monthly payments. Customers would automatically save on expenses while paying loan off the loan.

Contractors selected through the Town's RFP will offer better pricing than other contractors, but residents are free to shop pricing.

Mr. Brewster asked about the RFPs. Hamden issued an RFP and then did a revised RFP which made certain measures mandatory, but there are a host of other things that not every contractor can provide. You can use the Smart E loan to do either of those measures and optional measures in the home.

Mr. Bosworth asked if hot water heaters were in the RFP for pricing and the response was yes. The customer picks the equipment. Information will be available from contractors, seminars, and a page on the web site for contractor resources and pricing.

Mr. Walter said this program is based on Solarize Connecticut, but this program does not pertain to one product, but to many products. A fact sheet on line would be great. Rebates are available.

Mr. Kroop said Naugatuck Savings and Quinnipiac Bank are on the list for financing, but if a customer's own bank wants to get on the program, the bank should contact Mr. Walter. Many banks are holding mortgages and he thinks local banks will want to get involved.

The contract must be signed with contractor by 9/15. Citizens can use their own contractor. The RFP is still open, so contractors can consider bidding. There are potentially 8,000 homes that can convert. The huge volume of customers will allow contractors to offer lower prices.

The Energize Hamden team will be at the Farmer's Market, concert series, library series, and will be speaking at many venues throughout Town. The more neighbors participating, the better the price will be. Hamden and Waterbury are the two towns selected for this pilot program.

Education is a big part of this program. Dr. Cooper lives at Currier Ridge Condos. He did a private HVAC conversion and went from 55% efficiency to 95% efficiency. He took a 10 year loan and makes the payments on his electric bill.

Mr. Backus asked why the program sign up is ending on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Borelli explained that because of the gas conversions, it has to be done before the ground freezes. Work must be completed by 12/31/13.

Mr. Sachetti thanked the public for their comments and thanked Ms. Borelli and Mr. Walter for their presentation. Mayor Jackson will be doing a press event on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4. Report of the Director

Mr. Kroop referred to Page 2 of the handout and said he has spoken to businesses that have been dragging their fee regarding paperwork. After talking to them, three asked that the funds be returned to the pool. Two of them accomplished their work without needing the loans. Another decided they didn't want the loan.

Moe's Southwest Grill might come back to us. They have to bring in the right quote and will need the money. The dentist will close in the next couple of weeks if conditions permit. He will receive a \$25,000 loan for equipment, but has to spend \$50,000 of his own money first. Page 1 of the handout shows the total accounts receivable of \$55,530 and the total available funds of \$384,468.

Mr. Kroop said the incentive committee approved money for another personal trainer, but the property was being foreclosed, so the applicant backed out and is looking for a new location. Businesses using the incentive dollars are required to remain for five years or they will incur a penalty. There are only a few instances of businesses becoming defunct during the time we have offered this program. The remainder of the budget is status quo.

Mr. Sachetti asked how the repayments on the micro loans have been performing. Mr. Kroop replied that there are five loans out, one is way behind but they are now making triple payments. Another is habitually 30 days late. Three others are always on time. Richard Pearce is helping one business that is behind, with their marketing, etc. His goal is to pay off his \$3,500 small loan first and then pay on the \$32,000 loan.

Mr. Kroop said we don't have enough of a portfolio for a bank to service the loans. The economy drives participation in the program, and also the vacancy rate.

Mr. Kroop passed around the commission member list with addresses and phone numbers for updates.

Mr. Kroop introduced Ashley, a Quinnipiac Presidential Fellow, who will be working with him through August. She is mostly working on research and will write some press releases. Kristen was also in attendance. She was with us last summer and then became a paid employee and will be here through August. Kristen will focus on communications and the web site.

Mr. Kroop said we would like to have a fall session on health care/benefits for small businesses and another energy presentation will happen for commercial property owners. The C-Pace program is on financing and goes on the tax bill. The Legislative Council has to pass a Resolution to empower us to get banks involved as second to the Town's taxes and stays with the house. This has been approved in several towns, and most recently by Meriden. The only requirement of the Town after the resolution is a supplemental tax bill from the tax office. This will go to Council for the August meeting.

Mr. Diaz said with all of these energy efficiency programs, a matrix would be helpful. Zambrano mentioned a speaker on solar and wind, and those energy sources should go on the matrix, which should be available on the Town's web site. Mr. Kroop asked commissioners to email ideas for fall speakers to him.

The Farmer's Market opens on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and the all abilities playground opens at the same time.

The Hamden Business Incubator is getting ready for a big announcement next week. This will offer opportunities for lot of small businesses.

Mr. Kroop received a lot of calls when Expect Discounts announced it was moving out of its North Haven location. Several Hamden locations were suggested. Stop & Shop controls locations near their stores and would not allow Expect to locate near them. Expect wants to remain in North Haven because of highway access.

##### 5. Old Business:

Centerplan (Bob Landino of Barakas Landino) purchased the corner of Mather and Dixwell. They do large redevelopments in the northeast like Walgreen's. They will knock down the old factory and will open a retail store 10,000 sf with parking behind it and another store behind that with a second story. They will try to build out the corner. Ms. Giannini asked if we have to do road improvements. Mr. Kroop has had many conversations with property owners. A master developer is needed to come up with a master plan. The concept was to move Mather Street to line up with with the post office. Centerplan is looking for a greater development than just that corner. This is a corner of the Town that might change most dramatically in the next five years.

Chipotle is open.

6. New Business:

The only vacant space in the Mart is where the Chinese buffet was, and that has been rented but we're not sure what is going in there. Good Old Toms moved to the Mart and is doing very well. There is still nothing in the Bally space. Mr. Kroop has been looking at Au Bon Pain. They could not come to an agreement on their lease with Yale. They need a high volume pedestrian traffic like Starbucks. Hamden's Starbucks has the highest volume per square foot of any of their stores.

275 Welton Street, a 27,000 sf building, was purchased for \$340,000 cash by an import export business. They need to renovate.

A brewery and tap room is open in a building on State Street behind another building. They will make, bottle and sell their product and have tastings. It is not a bar.

On Thursday, Economic Development is hosting a barbeque at an open house at Highwood Square across from the Keefe Center from 12-3. They have a tent for cooking ribs, hotdogs, and hamburgers. Artists will show what they've been doing. A dentist and two financial service companies have located there. The idea is to show the progress of the development and bring brokers to see the remaining space. It is a marketing tool. The rain date is Friday.

Mr. Giannini mentioned a building with potential medical offices south of the parkway. Mr. Kroop said it is moving forward, but he can't discuss it yet. There are many other things going on.

Mr. Kroop hopes to have a couple of Hamden cluster meetings this summer, possible one for realtors and one for healthcare companies. Workforce is also invited. They like to have one or two meetings a year for each cluster.

7. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

8. Adjournment

**Mr. DelGrego made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Zambrano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.**

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gerry Tobin, Commission Clerk

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