



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

**Dale Kroop, Director**

**Minutes:** The Economic Development Commission, Town of Hamden, held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the third floor conference room, Hamden Government Center. The following issues were discussed:

Commissioners in Attendance: Mr. Sachetti, Mr. Diaz, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. DelGrego, Mr. DeNicola, Ms. Borelli

Commissioners Absent: Ms. Gretencord, Ms. Giannini, Mr. Inzero, Mr. Moses, Mr. Rolnick (excused)

Also in Attendance: Management Consultant Randi Frank, 9<sup>th</sup> District Legislative Council Representative Marjorie Bonadies, UCONN Student/Intern with Ms. Frank Polly Smith, Commercial Lines Insurance Broker Peggy Hill, Neighborhood Works New Horizons Gloribell Lopez, Ives Webb Solutions Chris McEnery, New York Life Insurance Pam Souchuns,

1. Call to order

Mr. Sachetti called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and welcomed guests.

2. Reading and Approval of minutes of the Meeting of December 10, 2013

Page 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> line under Old Business, change Mr. DelGrego to Mr. Sachetti

**Mr. DelGrego made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2013 as corrected. Mr. Zambrano seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

3. Speaker – Randi Frank of Randi Frank Consulting LLC

Management and Human Resources Planning

Mr. Kroop introduced guest speaker Randi Frank. Ms. Frank said her background is administrative/management, and she can help a business through various stages of recruitment, personnel policies and training. Ms. Frank provided information packets to those in attendance, and said details can be found on her web site. Ms. Frank's packet is self explanatory and is attached to these minutes. During Ms. Frank's presentation, several commissioners asked questions:

What protection do employees have if they are asked inappropriate questions? Ms. Frank responded that in the State of Connecticut you can go to CHRO, and then it is one person's word against the other. CHRO will ask for the list of questions asked, and if all candidates were asked the same questions. They might look for a pattern.

If a small business person had a great interview and wants to confirm information by doing a typical background check, how should they go about it? Ms. Frank said use a company that does that kind of check. The company will guarantee that they looked at everything. A credit check can only be done if the person being hired has financial responsibilities. The company can look at criminal and civil backgrounds, check reference, confirm degrees, etc.

Do companies look at social media and is that legal?

Ms. Frank responded not “too” legal. Many companies are doing it. Courts and laws are not up to date with social media.

What if the background check shows a legal gun permit. Ms. Frank said that shouldn't be something that comes up in the checks. You are looking for arrests or lawsuits in the criminal/civil checks.

A commissioner asked Ms. Frank to define “not too legal.” Ms. Frank said teachers, police officers, firemen come under different rules. She mentioned a camp counselor that got in trouble for posting on Facebook what the campers did during the day, who got hurt, etc. No health information should be posted.

Regarding employee evaluations, best practices would be to absolutely have evaluations, especially during a new hire's introductory period. Big companies do it, the military does it, but managers have to be trained to do an evaluation.

When calling to check on a reference from a former employer, all the company would report was the date of hire and the date of termination. Ms. Frank said many companies have rules about not giving out references. Perhaps the job applicant could give a former coworker as a reference, who could speak off the record. The hiring company might also get permission from the potential hire to look at their personnel record from the former company.

If after a background check you find the person has lied, is there any redress? Ms. Frank said that is rare, but in one case a gentleman was harassed by a woman, and when he complained that no one did anything about it. After this happened several times, he finally made a claim, and then the woman made a claim. The man won a lot of money from company when it was determined that the woman lied.

Mr. Sachetti thanked Ms. Frank for her presentation.

Mr. Kroop announced that February's speaker is Marjorie Clark from Little Fish on the subject of digital marketing, and in March Jason from Operation Fuel will speak on the subject of small grants for small businesses for energy improvements. Mr. Kroop is looking at other possibilities including a panel on financing.

#### 4 Report of the Director

Updates:

- The Financial report shows nothing extraordinary and is attached. TriCon, Rite Quote and Burt Processing are on the list.

- The December 31<sup>st</sup> report from the Greater New Haven Loan Fund (attached) shows everyone is current. Clean Gear has since paid another payment and has now paid off their small loan. We had numerous meetings with Clean Gear and all of the agreements are in the hands of the owners, and we are wrapping that up. The GNHLF felt we should restructure the loan and move the final payment date to 2019. Mr. Kroop thanked them for their opinion, but we have decided to have them double their payments for one year.
- Ms. Bonadies asked for clarification regarding legal expenses. The costs to get a loan started can be forgiven if the borrower makes their payments on time and in full, but the costs of collection have to be paid by the borrower. Mr. Kroop said the report will be changed to add the late fees. All other borrowers are up to date.
- Mr. Kroop said a new Purchasing Ordinance has been approved by the Legislative Council. In the past Mr. Kroop has talked about offering an ordinance to the town to allow small businesses in town to match a certain price if they were within a 10% of the lowest bidder. The purchasing agent disagreed saying that out of town bidders might not bid any more. Prior purchasing rules stated that if the cost would be under \$500, the town could hire whoever it wants. Costs between \$500 and \$2,000 required a quote waiver and three bids on company letterhead. Costs between \$2,000 and \$5,000 required a more formal process and had to go out to bid. This process has been in place since 1974. The new purchasing policy allows the town to hire anyone it wants if the cost is up to \$2,000. From \$500 to \$10,000, three quotes from local businesses on letterhead and a quote waiver are required. There are also on call lists for certain services with the purchasing agent, but these have to be updated ever few years. Costs from \$10,000 and up have to go through the sealed bid process (previously set at \$5,000). Request for Proposal (RFP's) are determined within the thresholds by the purchasing agent. Price is a factor, but not the only factor. Mr. Kroop said he can now focus on hiring Hamden businesses, working more closely with the purchasing agent.
- Mr. Kroop distributed an article on New Business Openings and Projects Approved in 2013, which is attached. There will be a newsletter coming out in a week or two summarizing for the public what this Commission does. Legislative Council members will be put on the Commission's email list. Mr. Kroop said while 40 new small businesses opened in Town during 2013, we can't change the negative (Stop & Shop closing). His report focuses on the positive.
- Business Resource Center at Library - The new Director of Library, Ms. Amodeo, and Mr. Kroop looked at the Business Resource Center, which was in shambles. A few months ago, Mr. Kroop mentioned re-instituting the Business Resource Center, purchasing software, books and periodicals. The cost is estimated at slightly under \$2,000. Richard Pearce has not seen the list yet, and the price will probably come down somewhat. Perhaps Mr. Pearce could be there one day showing people how to do a business plan. People have been using the existing computers to do job searches. Mr. Zambrano asked if the computers could be restricted to certain sites. Mr. Kroop said absolutely.
- The Town will put out an RFP for the old middle school in February. He has had many calls. A press release will be issued regarding the environmental conditions at the building. The RWA has been doing some work behind the tennis courts. The HEDC (Hamden Economic Development Corporation) now owns the building. We are moving full steam ahead for design. The building is now listed on the State Register which allows us to raise

money for tax credits. We will probably go out to bid in April, and this will be a gut rehab. Real estate agents feel the building is only useful for residential. We will see.

- America's kids next to the former Stop & Shop in the Acme Mall has closed. Stop & Shop's lease runs out on Valentines Day and then the property owner can do what he wants with the property.
- Mr. Kroop said the budget is coming up again. Every year he presents pretty bare bones budget, and every year the budget gets cut and his department is asked to raise money through grants, including funds for half of his salary. No other department head is asked to do this. This Commission is not happy about how the department is treated every year. He is now a staff of one plus a part time secretary. He is looking for an assistant director and wants to see 100% of his salary salary put into the budget. The budget goes to the Legislative Council in March and they have until May to pass the budget. Mr. Kroop's contract expires at the end of November 2014. He looks forward to working with the Commission for many years to come. Because the Commission's long range 3 year plan expires on 12/31/14, we will start doing some subcommittee evaluation of our programs during the summer.
- A restaurant is looking at the Jack Miller site and is waiting for DOT approval. The proposal is to cut off the exit from CVS, and unify traffic to a new light. The Board of Education Operations Committee has approved the proposal, which now goes to DOT and then to the BOE.
- Another Froyo place is opening near Tommy K's
- Massage Envy is opening in the Hamden Mart at the end of this month
- Another new store is opening in the Nine West space
- The SBC property is under contract and is not a restaurant
- The new building next to the post office is taking shape
- There is a meeting on Saturday, 1/18/14 from 8:30 to 10:30, Breakfast with the Legislators and is an opportunity to ask legislators questions regarding the PILOT program

5. Old Business:

6. New Business:

Business Incentive Application

Public Adjuster Todd Moler is in negotiations to purchase the Kamp & Nielson Building. Mr. Kamp is downsizing. Mr. Moler will subdivide the utilities and bring in another business. The level of his investment is low and is basically rehab. No tax incentive has been recommended. A \$3,000 grant toward fit up and the waiver of 100% of building permit fees excluding plumbing, electric and HVAC is recommended. Funds are available from the Economic Development Fund. Mr. DelGrego asked if Mr. Kroop sees any problems with subdividing. Mr. Kroop sees no problems at the moment but did meet with P&Z preliminarily, and there were no problems evident. Mr. Zambrano said we should work with Zoning and try to intervene if there are any obstacles.

**Mr. DelGrego made a motion to approve the Business Incentive Application for Todd Moler, The Public Adjuster for a \$3,000 grant toward fit-up and the waiver of 100% of building permit fees excluding plumbing, electric and HVAC. Mr. Diaz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

7. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

Included under Mr. Kroop's Report

8. Adjournment

**Mr. DeGrego made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Diaz seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.**

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

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