



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, December 9, 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. Good, Mr. DeNicola, Ms. Sacco, Mr. Diaz, Mr. DelGrego, Mr. Zambrano, Mr. Moses

Commissioners excused: Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Rolnick, Ms. Gretencord

Others in Attendance: Economic Development Director Kroop, Commission Clerk Tobin

1. Call to order

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

2. Reading and Approval of minutes of the Meeting of November 19, 2014

Mr. Zambrano made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19th meeting. Mr. Diaz seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

3. Report of the Director

Page 2 of the budget form, the Burt Processing work is done and Burt has been paid. Moller only spent about one third of what was planned, so no grant was awarded. The Bauer project is almost done, and will be paid out after the first of the year. Attorney Bauer owns two buildings on Whitney Avenue across the street and a little north of the post office, and is building a bridge between the two buildings. Page 1 shows \$419,454 in unencumbered funds.

4. Old Businesses

Mr. Kroop said his contract was approved. Mr. DelGrego and Mr. Zambrano attended the Legislative Council meeting and spoke in favor. The contract goes to 11/24/16. The 25 hours per week position for the Economic Development Specialist was approved by Council. Applications are being taken until they close tomorrow. A permanent appointment will probably be made after January. This took about two years of work. Mr. Kroop will be asking for additional personnel, and whether or not they give him another position, he will need more help. The contract is silent on the expectation of grants subsidizing his salary, but it probably is expected. His is the only department in Town that this is required of.

The current Economic Development Ordinance expires at the end of this month. The commission has approved an extension to June 30th, and during that time they will be working on a new plan and a new budget. The Ordinance will be on the calendar for the January Legislative Council meeting. Mr. Kroop explained that prior to the new members joining the commission, existing commissioners were assigned to subcommittees. The new budget will be in place for three years. Mr. Kroop will start giving the commissioners information regarding tax benefits, micro loans, interested collected, job creation, etc. He will also be reporting on the Business Assistance Center. An Executive Summary of the previous three year plan was distributed. What we have done has been successful, but we still want to see some fresh ideas. Mr. Kroop said a lot of businesses don't know about our programs. He has a lot of thoughts about ways to target certain businesses.

Mr. Kroop mentioned that he plans to hold cluster meetings after the first of the year to get input, and explained the different clusters. He mentioned the green cluster which might no longer exist. Urban Miners and UI are still in the green cluster. He mentioned Grease Guys, which used to collect grease from the fast food restaurants and have it converted to biofuel. There will be a lot of activity in the first quarter.

5. New Businesses

Mr. Kroop just returned from the ISCA (International Center Association conference, a very strong and well financed trade group. He said they hold numerous really good educational programs. This is the only he usually goes to, and this year it was called The Deal Making Conference. There were about 9,000 people in attendance, and it was held at the Javitz Center. People were there with contracts, plans, etc. Mr. Kroop represented Hamden and REX, helping with their booth. He met developers, talked to brokers for certain retailers, i.e. trying to get another Starbucks in the northern part of Town. Most of them have exclusive brokers. He met with the brokers that represents the Market Place in Hamden, which is planning some changes in the future. Very few towns were represented there and there were a few regional organizations. Mr. Kroop handed out brochures about Hamden. Developers are looking for data about the Town's workforce, age, median family income, housing prices, etc., that he can send both electronically and on paper. Donald Trump was the keynote speaker at the conference. Mr. Kroop said he targeted people who have made entry into New Jersey or Connecticut. He mentioned that Auto Zone is looking at an additional facility on property adjacent to Bed Bath and Beyond. He also mentioned Advanced Auto is looking at space on Dixwell Avenue. There is 100% occupancy in the Hamden Mart and the Hamden Plaza. The Market Place has only one available space next to TJMaxx. 100 Skiff Street has been purchased by the Tagliatellas, who will build apartments there in the future.

Mr. Kroop said that development south of the parkway needs higher income people living there. Mix avenue has approximately 1/5th of Hamden's residents living there. The Median family income Town wide is in the high 60's. In northern Hamden it is in the 80's. It dramatically less south of the Parkway. He told Planning & Zoning that to be able to market the Town to these developers, regulations are useless. Without people with money, it doesn't work.

Mr. Moses asked what is it that you are marketing in Hamden. He also asked about the business in the Hamden Mart and Plaza, and on an a, b,c, scale how would they be rated. Mr. Kroop replied b or b-.. and south of the Parkway, perhaps b and c. We have to be realistic and work with what we have. Mr. Zambrano asked how Autozone can have another location 1.5 miles from their current business, with Pep Boys nearby and Weiner's near Mather Street. Mr. Kroop said sometimes businesses have information that we don't have. We have to realize what our attributes are and what our negatives are.

Mr. Kroop said he spoke to people that manage Putnam Place shopping center. He has seen them at this show twice. They were not interested. Last year at the show, basically they told him to go away and they were very cold. They do a lot of high end stuff. This time they were one of the sponsors of the show. They had an electronic board listing all of their properties showing what is available. 10 Putnam Place was listed. He never got to meet with them and he is still digging to find out what is going on. On the abc rating, that is a d site.

6. Project Updates: Redevelopment, Openings, Etc.

Business Resource Center at the Library - this Board gave Mr. Kroop funding to purchase new computers, software, etc. Th library will maintain the Center. Perhaps we will do a coffee and after the first of the year. We will do more auditing of who is using the Center, etc.

The two self storage projects are moving along. The once on the SBC site is looking better. There is light in there now. Site work has been done for the one on Putnam Avenue. The same group did close on the other self storage building on Sherman Avenue.

The EPD site on Putnam Avenue was a polluted mess but will become 32 apartments. The Town still owns 3.5 acres on Gallagher Road, one of the only vacant pieces of property left in the Town of Hamden. Mr. Zambrano mentioned Camco. Medical offices are being built at the corner of Whitney Avenue and Colonial Drive. Development at Dixwell and Mather is a year behind. The will not demo until leases are signed. Mr. Kroop is trying to get brokers interested in 1409 Dixwell Avenue, the Himmel Brothers Site, north of where the old Stop & Shop used to be. The property consists of a 40,000 sf industrial bldg with some land in the back.

Mr. Kroop said many properties that would have been on the top 10 worst properties in Hamden list are being developed or have been purchased.

Mr. Kroop talked about speculators vs. long time owners. Speculators will sell the approval or walk away from their proposed project.

We will have another association of neighborhood associations meeting and he would like commissioners to come in as we need the support and understanding of the neighborhood groups. They also have to be educated as to how long it takes the economy to grow. When the zoning regulations were revised, there was no attempt to integrate this commission. It has been made impossible to do anything on Whitney Avenue that is commercial where there is currently a house.

Mr. Sachetti said the next meeting of this Commission is January 13th. He called for a motion to adjourn.

7. Adjournment

Mr. DelGrego made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Moses seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
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