



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

Minutes of the meeting of April 14, 2015

Dale Kroop, Director

Attending: Anthony DelGrego, David DeNicola, Rachel Grentencord-Cutter, Ken Good, Steven Rolnick, Anthony Sacchetti, Jennifer Sacco, Robert Zambrano

Absent: Steven Diaz, Donald Moses, A.E. Rodriguez

Also in attendance: Economic & Community Development Director Mr. Dale Kroop

Call to order

Mr. Sacchetti called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Others in Attendance: Gail Traester and Cindy Civitello, co-presidents of the Westwoods Civic Association; Dale Kroop, Economic and Community Development Director; Catherine Gempka, Substitute Clerk

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Sacchetti entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 10, 2015.

Mr. DelGrego motioned to approve the minutes of March 10, 2015, seconded by Ms. Sacco.

The motioned carried, 7 in favor, 1 abstain.

Guest: Captain Ronald Smith, Hamden Police Department, Richard Pearce, Coordinator Hamden Business Assistance Program

Captain Smith was asked to speak to the Commission in place of Police Chief Wydra who was unavailable at the last minute. Captain Smith reviewed the department's uniform crime reports noting that crime has reduced in the last 3-4 year period. The department submits its monthly reports to the State Police who in turn forward the reports of all state police departments to the FBI. The index shows that major crime in the 2012-2013 timeframe is down 3% and 2013-2014 down 5%. Captain Smith stated he reviews all reports in the department on a daily basis and information is sent to the media i.e. newspapers, radio, TV and the community. Not all crimes are major but he reports those the community should be made aware of.

Mr. Kroop inquired if other towns report as Hamden does. Captain Smith replied yes to the State Police but has no information as to how other towns filter their information.

Mr. Pearce inquired about home invasions and asked if the perpetrator is known to the victim? Captain noted that the majority of offenders are not known to the home owners.

Mr. Zambrano inquired about the Canal Line south of Connolly Parkway and wanted to know if all felonies are reported? Captain Smith noted that he gets calls from the media daily and the media then chooses which incidents they wish to report to the public.

Mr. Sacchetti asked if the crime rate is reducing and what has the department done to reduce crime? Captain Smith noted that officers drive through a number of problem areas monitoring them. Block Watches have been involved and his helps to alert the department. Some specialized units have had to be re-deployed by helping with the patrol division. The department at this time is looking to hire additional officers in the very near future.

Mr. Pearce inquired if the Sub-Station on Dixwell Ave. is manned 24/7. Captain Smith stated that officers do come and go from the site to do reports have their meals and when not there a call phone is set up for pick up directly to dispatch to help those in need. A second Sub Station is also at the Lockkeepers House on the Farming Canal at Whitney and Shepard Avenues.

Mr. Kroop noted a local dentist located at Highwood Square is very pleased with the opening of the Sub Station.

Mr. Zambrano noted that Relators for businesses are not coming south of the Parkway but that residential realtors have a different perceptive. He feels the question may be that other towns don't report like Hamden does, could that be in question? Captain Smith noted that it is the potential buyer's right to know the status of crime in a town and the realtors have to be prepared to respond to that question.

Mr. Kroop noted that no other Town Economic Develop Office one gets the volume of emails our Economic Development office receives daily.

Captain Smith noted that he has a number of distribution email list that he sends information to daily. He feels this is a benefit and is a needed community service. He noted that there have been incidents that the media is aware of even before the police know.

Ms. Sacco inquired if he officers are given training on racial profiling? Captain Smith note that the department recently had a training session and that they hold them periodically.

Mr. Sacchetti thanked Captain Smith for his presentation.

Mr. Richard Pearce, Coordinator Hamden Business Association Program

Mr. Pearce provided a memo (copy attached) outlining the process of the Center since its inception approximately ten years ago. This program was an initiative created out of the Commission. The program services current Hamden business owners, residents who are thinking of opening a business and also assists business in keeping them in business. The program is a form of clearing house. The program helps with a business plan, marketing, technology and strategies for survival and possible expansion. The diversity of businesses has changed dramatically.

Mr. Kroop noted that the Business Incubator is working with startup and middle level businesses.

Mr. Pearce went on to note that people start out with good intentions and after meeting with them they realize they need to do some work on understanding bookkeeping, marketing and keeping their product current before returning to meet with him again.

Mr. DelGrego inquired how the program filters potential applicants who maybe not should start a business and does he feel his time has been wasted. Mr. Perce noted that after meeting with the individuals most realize that there is a lot more involved than that had any idea. There are times when someone will come and he won't hear from them again for a year or so they then return with their plan ready for them to start. He feels time provided to an individual is valuable because he rather someone come then just start a business and it fails and the town then has another possible empty space.

Mr. Rolnick inquired if when Mr. Pearce goes to a business do they have major problems. Mr. Pearce noted each situation is unique and the problem for one business is not that of another.

Ms. Sacco inquired if he Town has workshops? Mr. Pearce stated that they have done them in the past and the response has varied. There are presently Pod Cast on the web site if you go to Hamden.com, click on Government and in the dropdown click on Economic Development and the site page will bring you to a Pod Cast Series.

Mr. Good inquired if technical support is provided and also if he makes a judgement on the proposed business. Mr. Pearce noted that technology it is part of the business plan. He does not however make a judgement on the plan because the widget of today can be the hottest item on the market and someone may have a new angel on that widget and who knows if it will work, it isn't his call, it is the call of the public.

The question was asked if he does a seminar series and yes he does and he brings in people who are qualified to address the various topics discussed for the seminar. Mr. Kroop noted that the department utilizes Mr. Pearce and the BVAC when we know about businesses that are in trouble. N example of that was Books and Company.

Directors Report

Mr. Kroop introduced his new assistant/secretary Karen Regan. Karen has been working with him for some time but it is now official.

Long Range Plan –Mr. Kroop advised the Commission that he will be sending out requests from the Committees for major frame work for the May meeting. He has provided a handout with a questionnaire attached and would like everyone to please respond as soon as possible.

Mr. Kroop noted that the summary provided by Mr. Pearce also contains a statistics review. He reviewed the Micro Loan figures and if anyone has questions please do not hesitate to call him.

He also reviewed the Three Year Plan briefly but is waiting for information from the Finance Department to finalize the figures.

New Business

At this time Mr. Kroop address the upcoming changes with the resignation of Mayor Jackson.\ effective April 16, 2015. The Legislative Council Chairman James Pascarella will be interim

Mayor until a special election can be held. The individual chosen at that election will be in place until such time as the November election. There may be a primary it will depend on the number of candidates in each party seeking their parties support.

Old Business

Mr. Kroop will be attending the Regional Chamber Business & Community Expo on Wednesday April 15, 2015 at the CFC Arena 1018 Sherman Ave. He will also be going to the Business Expo on April 23, 2015 Hartford CT.

Project Updates

Centerville Lumber – the developer John Maturo is going forward with the hotel and currently seeking financing.

Mather St. & Dixwell Ave. – Advanced Auto Parts will rebuild the current structure with 9,000 sq. ft.

Stop & Shop at Putnam and Dixwell is in foreclosure but may have been bought back by the current owner, DLC Management but there is no news on how the space will be used.

The new self-storage on Dixwell Ave. & Weybosset St. will be opening end of May early June.

This is a climate controlled building and has a drive up loading area.

Putnam Ave. – Construction is in process.

Hamden Incubator – this project is going out to bid in the next two weeks.

Sanford St. – ground was just broken on this project.

100 Skiff t. – the developer wants to build apartments.

380 Mather St. is still working on the addressing the traffic situation on Dixwell Ave. & Mather St.

315 Mather St. this 77 unit housing project is in process

Hamden Middle School – the developer wants to construct 99 apartments, 57 in the existing building. A mix of Market Rate and Affordable housing is part of the plan.

Auto Zone is considering building next Bed, Beth & Beyond on Dixwell Ave.

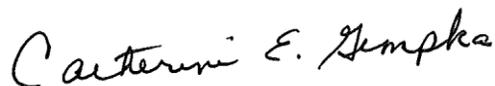
Park Projects – Rochford Field and Villano Park - Rochford Field and Villano Park are going to be multiuse venues. Albertus Magnus will be negotiating with the town to share the site and there will be soccer, baseball and little league usage.

The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday May 12, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. Third floor Conference Room, Hamden Government Center.

Adjournment

At 6:58 p.m. Mr. DelGrego motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rolnick. ***The motion carried unanimously.***

Submitted by,



Catherine E. Gempka
Substitute Clerk
CEG/bme