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Mayor

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Michael Piscitelli
Economic Development
Administrator

Minutes
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 14, 2023
Virtual Zoom-Based Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Dan McLeggon
Sarah Miller, Alder Ward 14, Aldermanic Representative
Casey Pickett
Miguel Pittman, Sr. (Vice-Chair)
Anthony Sagnella (Chair)

City Staff Present:

Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator
Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator
Courtney Hendrickson, Deputy Economic Development-ARPA
Cathy Graves, Deputy Director Economic Development-Small Business
Malachi Bridges, Economic Development Officer-Neighborhood Commercial
Steve Fontana, Deputy Director Economic Development
Helen Rosenberg, Economic Development Officer

Guests:

Oliver Gaffney, TPA

Call to Order: Meeting was formally opened by Mr. Sagnella at 8:39 pm upon reaching a quorum. In light of the recent addition of new commissioners to the Development Commission, a round of introductions was made.

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Minutes were informational only due to lack of quorum at previous meeting.

Proposed Mill River Municipal Development Plan

- Carlos Eyzaguirre opened with a description of the Mill River area, the area between the beginning of Hamilton and James and stretching North and South. This is a traditional commercial industrial area currently in a transitional phase as it develops housing regions.
- Helen Rosenberg began by giving a short history of the Mill River area. The first Mill River plan, which has now expired, covered the area across the river and created a new road geography which



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allowed for many business successes. Now, many of the heavy industrial users have closed, clearing up industrial space; meanwhile, the focus on home goods and food manufacturing has increased. The proposed Mill River improvements include completing the Mill River trail, removing unused railroad infrastructure, and generally increasing the economic vitality while also reconnecting with the residential area on the East. The 2013 study is referenced numerous times to rationalize the new plan components and the redevelopment opportunities. Helen described a tentative schedule for approval which is as follows: 1) City Plan Commission in September 2023, 2) SCRCOG in October 2023, 3) NHDC in November 2023, 4) Board of Alders in December 2023, 5) DECD in January 2024.

- Helen concluded this section of the meeting by expressing the importance of the new MDP. She explained that an MDP will grant the Development Commission the authority to acquire properties. They would then be able to apply for project funding and decide how to best integrate these funds back into the area.

Questions/Discussion

- Helen responded to Alder Miller's inquiry on how neighborhood input beyond the official bodies would be incorporated. Helen and Carlos both responded, saying that public meetings like those held for the Mill River study would be organized.

- Alder Miller had additional questions regarding the status of English station and if there was any new information. Michael Piscitelli said that information was released publicly a few weeks ago regarding tensions with the Attorney General on the status of the building. Michael expresses his concern over their current work on rebalancing the district towards residential vibrancy in Grand Avenue and Fair Haven, more particularly by drafting a document which re-establishes the city's regulatory control.

- Finally, Casey Pickett asked if there were any other targeted development sites contributing to this new MDP plan. Helen expressed that the main properties had already been discussed however the clock factory, Chapel St edge, and Palmier's are also under consideration. Still, as the plan is being discussed, the properties considered may change.

Economic Development Updates

- Carlos began by introducing the programs from the American Rescue Plan focused on wealth creation and equitable growth. Cathy Graves described the NHE3 (New Haven Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem) which was born out of a \$46.6 million state-wide initiative established to give grants and support small businesses in New Haven. In July of 2022, the BOA approved further allocation of ARPA funds to support entrepreneur organizations in New Haven. Currently, \$500,000 is annually allocated towards these organizations and 10 small businesses or organizations each receive \$10,000. Cathy continued, explaining that the EDA is also involved at the technical assistance level via the DNA Of an Entrepreneur.

- Michael added encouragement for members on the call to spread awareness of this program to small business owners, particularly black and brown-owned small businesses. A link was sent to the commissioners to grant them access to support any business which applies.

- Malachi Bridges then introduced the release of the NEOC grants which was on June 18th. Eligible projects for this funding include public space, small business costs, special events, technical assistance, and real estate development. The range of this funding is \$5,000 to \$100,000 with \$100,000 primarily reserved for development or staffing proposals.

- Carlos continued by introducing the "Grand-er" Grand Avenue Project. In May, the EDA had applied for the CT Community Challenge Grant with a proposal to re-do the Grand Avenue infrastructure. A handful of preliminary designs were showcased and he then explained a plan for distributing the \$7 million of funding towards roadway & infrastructure, streetscape improvements, and a plaza.

- Finally, Courtney Hendricson described the STEM Talent Challenge Grant which is running via a partnership with Southern Connecticut State University. This is a \$600,000 total ask focused on the

101 College St classroom, geared towards high schoolers in the city of New Haven interested in bioscience career pathways. Highschoolers will then apply to be a part of the program titled Bio City with the grant money going directly towards the curriculum, teaching, and the upkeep of the classroom itself.

- Wrapping up the meeting, Carlos highlighted the National BBQ Day picnic which happened with the Science Park Development Corporation. Michael also extended a thank you to members who participated in the Yale Innovation Summit. Regarding the upcoming weeks, the Black Wall Street events will take place later this summer and neighborhoods will hopefully continue to support recent business openings such as Hustler's Vibe, Wow!! Tikka, and Any Occasion Creation.

Questions/Discussion

- Casey asked which organization delivered the DNA course. Cathy Graves responded that the program came out of the Office of Economic Development. Two cohorts of 9 weeks run annually to reach the largest number of entrepreneurs.

- Miguel Pittman then directed a question towards Malachi on how the grant was initially presented in a very small window of accepting applications. Courtney answered this question, saying that at least 30 days are initially given for grants, but the grant will not be out until June 19th because of internal lags in the procurement process.

Adjournment:

Carlos adjourned the meeting. at 9:32 am.