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Michael Piscitelli
Economic Development
Administrator

Minutes
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, July 12, 2023
Virtual Zoom-Based Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Dan McLeggon
Anthony Sagnella (Chair)
Sarah Miller
Miguel Pittman Sr. (Vice Chair)

City Staff Present:

Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator
Ginny Kozlowski, EDC of New Haven
Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator
Dean Mack, Economic Development Officer
Malachi Bridges, Economic Development Officer

Guests:

Douglas Hausladen, Executive Director of New Haven Parking Authority

Call to Order: Meeting was formally opened by Mr. Sagnella. Following the opening of this meeting, Mr. Sagnella announced his news that he will be stepping down as a commissioner and that this would be his final meeting.

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Minutes were tabled due to lack of quorum.

State and George DECD Challenge Grant / RFP Update

- Mr. Eyzaguirre began by introducing the Connecticut Community Challenge Grants which the EDA first applied to in 2022 for the State St realignment project to advance the Wooster Square Planning Study. Last year, the multimillion-dollar award for realigning the streets was announced and the implementation of the project is now underway. This includes streetside construction work as well as development of vacant sites on State and George Streets.

- Mr. Piscitelli then recentered the discussion on recovery initiatives and the community-led support which has been visible through different projects. Regarding the DECD Challenge Grant, Mr. Piscitelli described how the EDA was awarded \$5.4 million in state funding. They plan to match this



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with \$1.4 million from their own money to re-do State St. This funding is important as, one, State St is a part of the downtown municipal development plan and, two, the grant agreement recognizes transit-oriented growth. The grant funding prioritizes housing and development on this corridor of State St. The existing City-owned parking lots on State St will be converted into development sites and the City will solicit development partners for them. Mr. Piscitelli noted that Dean Mack has been working on the due diligence of this project and introduced many key partners of the project to the district.

Mr. Piscitelli further described New Haven's strong investment climate, the demand for over 50,000 housing units statewide as well leading role in data science research as factors in successfully obtaining this funding. New Haven also is a strong base for quantum investment because of the economic growth stemming from biotech research.

- Mr. Piscitelli then turned the discussion to development goals; the development solicitation for this project have changed some since the Wooster Square planning study in 2018. Now, the BOA's priorities are 1) jobs in New Haven, 2) public safety, 3) quality affordable housing, 4) health equity and vibrant communities, and 5) environmental justice. To identify a development pattern for the district, Mr. Piscitelli called on suggestions from the commissioners.

- From here, Mr. Mack took over to describe the economic incentives for development in the Wooster Square area. He began by touching on how high construction costs and interest rates will impact how the lots are divided up but whatever projects are elected must uplift city character. They are currently considering different ways to shape the RFP to influence a development that would allow for energy efficiency, sustainable building techniques, affordability, and local labor involvement.

- Mr. Piscitelli then described one complication in the solicitation process: an expensive underground vault in the middle of the site which has been a complicating factor in other adjacent development projects. Secondly, the issue of protecting the electrified railroads is a highly regulated process for both contractors and federal agencies.

Questions/Discussion

Alder Miller asked Mr. Piscitelli to highlight what the commission will need to vote on, to which Mr. Piscitelli described the resolution approval on the division and sale of the properties that are within the MDP boundaries.

Economic Development Updates

- Mr. Eyzaguirre introduced the monthly economic updates, starting with the NHE3 launch in supporting local businesses. The ARPA funding used in this grant program is already being distributed, primarily going to Black-, Brown, and women-owned businesses.

- The Neighborhood Equity Opportunity Challenge grant is also still accepting applications until July 25th. The deadline has been extended because there were various concerns about there being barriers to apply due to certain businesses not having a formal 501(c)3 status. Mr. Malachi Bridges continued to encourage commissioners and city staff to contact neighborhood commercial organizations and businesses to notify them of this grant funding program. As this is a "challenge" grant, the funding can be applied to various projects as long as they work towards overall ARPA funding goals.

- Mr. Bridges then summarized the current status of the Community Investment Fund (CIF) Round 3; the EDA completed three different sub-applications for the New Haven Green, Roadway & Two-Way Conversion, and Family Playground. These applications are under the "Downtown for All" application request for \$8 million which the EDA will match with \$1 million from city sources. With this funding, they will activate the New Haven Green by installing bathrooms and cafes, converting one-way Temple St to a two-way street, and adding more amenities for families on or near the Green.

- Mr. Mack expanded on the CIF Round 3 updates, explaining that they re-applied specifically for the Gateway district on Long Wharf as the former Gateway Community College building was just approved for City purchase via the Conveyance Act.

- Mr. Bridges went on to describe the Whalley Avenue/St. Luke's application for CIF Round 3 which consists of three sub-projects. First, the Roadway & Infrastructure project will consist of raised intersections being added at several locations on Whalley Ave including Sperry St and at Orchard St as well as mid-block crossings. The Streetscape Improvements project (\$750K) will allow for sidewalk repairs, curb extensions, and street furniture. Lastly, the St Luke's affordable housing project will consist of \$6 million for the St Luke's Development Corporation to start the construction of their 90% deeply- affordable 55 mixed-use housing complex.

- In addition the State of CT Brownfield Program awards were finalized on June 22nd. Roughly \$800K was awarded to 112 Chapel St to serve as a parking and loading area for Art to Frames, \$4 million was awarded to the ConnCAT Dixwell Plaza project, \$207K was awarded to 135 Fulton Terr for cleanup activities, and just under \$1 million was awarded to 34 Level St for redevelopment at a former nursing home facility site.

- Finally, Mr. Eyzaguirre informed the commissioners that the Federal SBA Commissioner, Commissioner Guzman, was recently in New Haven meeting with prior awardees from the SBA. This visit was significant in reaffirming SBA's role to backstop commercial lending as well as continuing to recognize companies like FAP Mechanical and Atticus, influential recipients of annual statewide SBA awards.

Adjournment:

Mr. Eyzaguirre concluded the meeting by reaffirming Commissioner Pittman's new role as Chair in Mr Sagnella's absence. Mr. Eyzaguirre adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30.