

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, September 3, 2026, 2026 at 5:00pm
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street & on Zoom

Present: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu -- Chair, Howard Schmelder -- Vice Chair (Zoom), City Council Member Susan Tyler, Commissioners Dave Mills, Marvin (Mickey) Goldwasser, Tom Hick (Zoom), LaQuita Kearney-Gonzales, and Louise Provenzano (Zoom)

Absent: Commissioner Jason Paul Sirko

ECD Staff: Justin Malley - Executive Director, Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator

Guests: Charlie Talmadge – President, Development Planning Solutions

I. Call to Order

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the August 6, 2026 Regular Meeting

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the August 6, 2026 Meeting. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. There were no edits or corrections noted. All were in favor and the Minutes were accepted into the record. Commissioner Schmelder abstained from the vote as he had not been present at the August Meeting.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve which was seconded by City Council

Member Tyler. No items were noted for discussion. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

A. Centre Square Parcel Report

Justin Malley provided information regarding Parcel 30-1 on the corner of N. Main Street and Riverside Avenue. This parcel was originally designated to be a pocket park for the city per an agreement with the state. Under that agreement, the city would fund the build out of publicly accessible green space and parking, and maintain the property with no taxes paid by the city.

Carrier is developing the neighboring Parcel 30-3 with a mixed-use building. They've expressed interest in owning Parcel 30-1 as part of their overall plan for the area, and have agreed to retain ownership and maintenance of the parcel as a fully designed civic space if approved. Justin Malley advised the Board that State approval has been received to sell Parcel 30-1 to Carrier provided they agree to the original intended use of the space.

The ECD Board now has the option to approve a motion to sell the property to Carrier. The proposed motion indicates the property would likely qualify for the Enterprise Zone abatement. Carrier is asking the Board to approve a sale price of \$1.00 for assuming the obligation to build out and maintain the parcel.

Charlie Talmadge spoke to the Board on behalf of the Carrier project and discussion followed including confirmation that the Board viewing site plans for the development as part of the approval process. Commissioner Goldwasser added that the Downtown Committee identified Carrier's ownership of Parcel 30-1 as positive for the city as it would mean keeping the planned use for the land and receiving taxes for it while removing the city's obligation to build it out and maintain it

A motion to waive the reading of the proposed Motion, and to approve the Motion as written was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and seconded by City Council Member Tyler.

The Motion as written reads as follows:

Motion to recommend Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, or Acting Mayor, to execute a Purchase and Sale Agreement and to complete the property transaction, subject to

the approval of Corporation Counsel, with Carrier Construction Inc. or its assigns for the sale and redevelopment of the Centre Square North Main Street property, identified as parcel 30-1 on the City land records, for the purchase price of \$1 to construct a parking area and publicly accessible green space.

Further, pending the legal acquisition of the Centre Square North Main Street property identified as parcel 30-1 by Carrier Construction, Inc. or its assigns for purposes of developing a parking area and publicly accessible green space, to approve the following Enterprise Zone tax abatement:

- *Construction Year #1 (period to begin immediately following property closing): 100% real property tax abatement attributable to the value of property improvements.*
- *Construction Year #2: 100% real property tax abatement on the value of property improvements.*
- *Construction Year #3: 100% real property tax abatement on the value of property improvements.*
- *Year #1 (period to begin following issuance of a certificate of occupancy): 100% real property tax abatement on the value of improvements*
- *Year #2: 100% real property abatement on the value of improvements.*
- *Year #3: 50% real property abatement on the value of improvements.*
- *Year #4: 40% real property abatement on the value of improvements.*
- *Year #5: 30% real property abatement on the value of improvements.*
- *Year #6: 20% real property abatement on the value of improvements.*
- *Year #7: 10% real property abatement on the value of improvements.*

I further move that this matter be referred to the Planning Commission for completion of a C.G.S. 8-24 Report, and to the City Council Real Estate Committee for completion of a C.G.S. 7-163e Public Hearing for the sale of municipally owned property.

There was no further discussion or questions. All were in favor and the motion accepted into the record.

Justin Malley took this moment to introduce City Hall Intern Nick Carmelich to the Board. Nick is currently working in conjunction with the Mayor's Office and the ECD Department and is earning his MPA from UCONN.

B. Downtown Update

JHM Group is the preferred developer for the former JH Sessions building at 273 Riverside Avenue, and they're reportedly making steady progress. Their architects have been at the property gathering information as part of the floor

plan layout process. JHM is also working with the city's Corporation Council attorneys on the purchase and sale agreement.

Justin Malley is encouraged by the developer's progress. Additional coordination needs to take place on the State and Federal level. JHM has expressed an interest in the use of the TIF Program (Tax Increment Financing) designed for just this type of use. Further information about the TIF program will be provided at the October Board Meeting.

Sei Bella Restaurant at the former Main Street Pint and Plate location on Main Street may open this month. Their exact opening date will be provided when it becomes available. Apex Golf has opened in the former Bikers Edge location at 99 Main Street. It is a member only high end golf instruction facility. Their holding an Open House on from 10am to 2pm on Sunday, September 6th.

The mayor mentioned that the Governor visited the city last week. He viewed the Route 72/69 intersection improvements and the West End in general. Long-term, steady tenancy was recognized, and the Public Works Department cleared the landscaping beds as part of an agreement made under the previous administration.

Commissioner Goldwasser asked for an update on the former athletic center building. The mayor reported that the issue was recently taken up with the Code Enforcement Department as the city believes the hazardous materials measurement report they were provided with is inappropriate. The city is in the process of obtaining an Administrative Warrant to gain access to test materials and make a decision when those results are in.

Dr. Dawn Leger reported that the city submitted information to determine site eligibility for an EPA assessment grant through NVCOG (Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments) for 296 Riverside Avenue. This would be an avenue for Phase I and possible Phase II to be completed at that location.

City Council Member Tyler asked about the former Bristol Press location on Riverside Avenue next to the new Apex Golf. Justin Malley confirmed that the building is available for use. He reports that the space is much improved inside as well as with the newly installed windows.

The mayor called for a Motion to accept the Report. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by City Council Member Tyler. All were in favor and the Report was accepted into the record.

C. Grants Update and Grants Management Software

Dr. Dawn Leger shared an update on the NAA (Neighborhood Assistance Act) which is a state initiative that gives corporate business tax credits to companies making cash contributions to approved municipal or tax-exempt community programs. Bristol is a pass through for the applications and the program is through the Department of Revenue Services in Hartford.

Applications for the program come to the city to ensure all the necessary materials are in hand, and that requests are appropriate for the program. They are then submitted to the State for approval. Dr. Leger reported that all the recent applications from Bristol were accepted by the State and included the Empowered to Work initiative through BristolWORKS!

Dr. Leger also advised that the city has not yet received the federal funds from the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) for FY52 (Fiscal Year 52). The Annual Report was filed on time and approved, as was the CAPER or Consolidated Report. It is unclear why the funds have yet to be released to the city.

The Residential Rehabilitation Program is steady as it continues to transition from a grant to a loan program. There is a waiting list for project requests which is indicative of a growing demand and less funding issued to the city each year.

Justin Malley spoke about an opportunity for the city to pursue a dynamic grant management software program offered by Avila. This program uses AI to help with grant research and writing, and grant management after the fact. A bid waiver request was made at the most recent Board of Finance Meeting after research into this service indicated that Avila was the only company with the product and services offered. Information about the company was provided to the Board for review.

The mayor called for a Motion to accept the Report. Commissioner Mills and seconded by City Council Member Tyler. All were in favor and the Report was accepted into the record.

D. Board of Finance (BOF) Transfer Request

Justin Malley requested a transfer to build up the Façade Grant fund and allow for approximately two new projects to receive this type of grant award.

Commissioner Goldwasser made the following Motion:

Motion to transfer \$15,000 from the Economic Development Expenses Account – Account #1044109-589300 – to the Façade Grant Account – Account #1044109-589335 – and to forward to the Board of Finance for action.

There was no discussion. The motion was seconded by City Council Member Tyler. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Schmelder spoke to the Carrier's Haviland Street project and encouraged everyone to view the Carrier's Facebook video where they explain the project phases and the grading taking place. On a personal note, the Commissioner expressed his thanks to the Board for their condolences and prayers at the recent and close passing of two of his family members.

There was no additional New Business by Commissioners.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

There was no Old Business by Commissioners.

The mayor updated the Board regarding the Special Zoning Commission Meeting with regard to the moratorium on vape shops. They are forwarding the moratorium for consideration as a new amendment in the coming week. The 18-month moratorium would be applicable to new applications while the city works through the new state laws, existing city ordinances, and all impactful requirements.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Industrial Committee Report

Commissioner Mills advised the Board that the Committee had met before the Board Meeting to discuss plans for Integrity Manufacturing at Lot #6 in the Southeast Bristol Business Park (SEBBP). The Committee would like the Board to consider and vote on the proposed Motions as provided.

City Council Member Tyler read the first Motion as follows:

Motion to approve the site plan and building elevation plan dated July 10, 2026 titled "Integrity Manufacturing LLC 190 Business Park Drive" representing the new construction project for Integrity Mfg. LLC (dba Integrity High Precision Grinding) on Lot 6 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park that includes construction of an approximately 23,100 square foot building and associated parking/loading area to serve as the headquarters for Integrity High Precision Grinding.

There was no discussion. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzalez. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

The mayor read the second Motion as follows:

Motion that Economic and Community Development staff must report to the Economic and Community Development Board details on final construction of Lot 6, including the mounting of building signage and landscaping, to ensure these activities align with the Southeast Bristol Business Park Design Guidelines and Regulations.

There was no discussion. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

City Council Member Tyler read the third Motion as follows:

Motion to sell Lot #6 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park at the listed price of \$156,000 to Integrity Manufacturing LLC (dba Integrity High Precision Grinding) for construction of an approximately 23,100 square foot manufacturing facility.

I further move that this matter be referred to the City Council for referral to the Planning Commission for completion of a C.G.S. 8-24 Report, and to the City Council Real Estate Committee for completion of a C.G.S. 7-163e Public Hearing for the sale of municipally owned property.

There was no discussion. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Kearney-Gonzalez. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

Commissioner Schmelder noted the achievement of all the properties being sold in full now and also on the tax rolls.

B. City Council Member Report

City Council Member Tyler reported on the tangible community support being provided in the wake of the Brian's Angels closure. Through Bristol Cares, all community partners in the city have been collaborating to fill in gaps that may surface as a result of the closing. St. Vincent DePaul and Meals for Neighbors were named as two agencies providing grab-and-go or hot meal services in the coming week.

IX. Adjournment

With no further discussion, the mayor called for a Motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Commissioner Mills and seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 5:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego

Recording Secretary