

NOTES
STAMFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING OF Tuesday, MARCH 20, 2007

TIME: 8:30 am
PLACE: Government Center
Mayor's Conference Room 10th Floor

ATTENDEES:

Economic Development Commission

Joel Selden, Chairman
Denis Patterson

Economic Development Staff

Mike Freimuth
Lenora Cavaliero

Guests:

The Greater Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Mildred Reyes, Secretary
John Toledo, President
Victor Roman, trustee

WBDC

Marion Cicoello, Director

Meeting opened at 9:00 am.

Chairman Joel Selden presided over the meeting.

February minutes were not approved due to a lack of quorum.

The staff of the Greater Stamford Hispanic Chamber of Commerce presented to the Commissioners an overview of their business locations throughout Stamford, indicating most of the businesses are located on the East side of Stamford and the Cove area. They are also spread throughout Stamford. The businesses are predominately retail/restaurant and service type oriented businesses, with 300 Hispanic origin contractors working in the trades. The population is at 100,000 in lower Fairfield County and approximately 25,000 Hispanics currently living in Stamford. Approximately 500 Hispanic businesses are located throughout the city.

Originally known as LAMAS (Latin American Merchants Association of Stamford) by 2001 they became known as The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and to date have 100 members. They are a volunteer organization and have recently moved to 700 Canal Street and are working on the first stages off setting up their office space. They want to offer services and help to the citizens to get them established and provide help to them with their business needs.

Mike Freimuth joined the meeting by telephone at 9:05 am and proceeded to welcome Mildred Reyes, Victor Roman, and John Toledo of the Greater Stamford Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. They gave an informative account and shared their enthusiasm of what their organization represents and what their expectations are going forward. Freimuth would like them to supply the Commission with specific numbers and types of businesses that have been established in Stamford and also asked what concerns and issues they would like addressed. On behalf of the Economic Development Commission he offered to provide them the support and help needed in getting organized.

Chairman Selden shared his belief that the job of Economic Development Commission is to reach out to the community to do make an effort to facilitate help to them.

They expressed their needs to the Commission and want help in dealing with training, education opportunities for the children and finances. They are working to reorganize the Chamber and they wish to help their citizens with the language barrier and would like to seek the help of the school administration to provide student mentors to their younger children of the non-speaking English parents. This would allow the younger children the opportunity to be mentored by the older student who is successfully being educated. In return for mentoring, they would suggest consideration be given to that student in the way of extra academic credits/scholarship.

The Greater Hispanic Stamford Chamber of Commerce will host a complete review to the public and to their members on April 3, 2007 at 6:30 pm at the Ferguson Library. They will focus on the Chamber's history, projection of the future and the current status of their organization. The Commissioner's will plan to attend this meeting.

The Chamber agreed to forward Mike Freimuth their statistics and he can take the opportunity as suggested by Commissioner Denis Patterson to contact the Advocate to provide a profile story on what this Chamber represents and what they expect to accomplish.

Freimuth suggested that we could incorporate a visit to the Chambers new facility when we go on our tour of the city during our April or May meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 17, 2007 at 8:30 am in the Mayor's Conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Lenora Cavaliero
Office of Economic Development