



Justin Elicker
Mayor

New Haven Development Commission

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Michael Piscitelli
Economic
Development
Administrator

Meeting Minutes Regular Meeting Wednesday, September 10, 2025 In Person/Online Meeting

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Miguel Pittman
Casey Pickett
Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith
Doug Coffin
Dan McLeggon
Rebecca Weiner
Charles Negaro
Manmita Dutta

CITY AND EDC STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Piscitelli, Economic Development Administrator
Carlos Eyzaguirre, Deputy Economic Development Administrator
Mark Wilson, Manager Neighborhood Commercial Development
Aya Beckles Swanson, Deputy Director Economic Development
Malachi Bridges, Project Manager
Michael Harris, Executive Director of the Economic Development Corporation – (Virtual)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was opened by Commissioner Pickett at approximately 8:25 am.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Administrative Updates

- Two new commissioners to join after next meeting: Rebecca Weiner (pending Board of Alders approval) and Ty Walker.
- August minutes tabled; July minutes approved unanimously.
- Technical issues noted but expected to be resolved going forward.

MILL RIVER: IMAGINE NEXT UPDATE (Community Meeting #3 to be held on 9/10)

- Focus on Mill River: Imagine Next Initiative (enabled by \$5M Urban Act funding).
- Goals: property acquisition, trail completion, pedestrian/bike connectivity, and general revitalization.
- English Station site to be acquired by the city for creation of Mill River Park and development of a public pool and other aquatic features.
- Community meeting scheduled for 9/10, 6 p.m. at John Martinez School; additional sessions planned (next one to be held at Conte West Hills Magnet School).
- Emphasis that this initiative builds upon long-term Mill River development planning.

Deputy Director Introduction – Aya Beckles Swanson

- Recently appointed Deputy Director of Economic Development (since Dec 2024).
- Tasked with updating the Mill River Municipal Development Plan (MDP).
- Plan will merge the expired Mill River MDP and the River Street MDP into a new, larger district.
- Two boundary versions presented: Version 1 (existing 2013 MDP + River Street MDP + adjacent mixed-use parcels) and Version 2 (adds Exit 3/Trumbull and south State Street).
- Commission members favored Version 2 for broader coverage and stronger integration with Reconnecting Communities.

Discussion of Proposed Boundaries

- Consensus to expand to include East Rock connection for greater accessibility.
- Assurance that historic brownstones and homes will not be targeted for demolition.
- Version 2 aligns with Reconnecting Communities area, offering long-term flexibility.

Key Sites and Redevelopment Priorities

- Focused properties: 414 Chapel Street (Ann Taylor building – permitted project that has stalled), O & G salt pile sites (Wolcott St, et al), Simkins site (East St), and English Station site.
- Also considering 413 & 433 Chapel Street for mixed-use redevelopment.
- Working with O & G and Gateway Terminal to relocate industrial uses (salt storage).
- Commissioners to review and rank priority parcels at future meeting.

MILL RIVER: IMAGINE NEXT UPDATE #2 – (CONTINUED)

Opportunity Zones and Funding Discussion

- Michael Harris explained Opportunity Zone (OZ) incentives and 10-year program extension.
- Both MDP versions include three OZ tracts with potential to add two more for investment flexibility.
- OZ overlap seen as positive for attracting private capital at lower cost.

Ethical Considerations

- Commissioner Coffin disclosed potential conflict regarding property near 360 James Street.
- Advised to consult ethics policy and recuse from related votes if needed.

Plan Development and Approval Process

- Steps: confirm boundaries, collect data, draft plan, host meetings, hold public hearings, and seek approvals.
- Approvals required from Board of Alders and State DECD.
- Draft MDP expected by late 2025 (Nov–Dec).

Community Engagement and Meeting Notices

- Staff to provide 1–2 weeks’ notice for all public meetings.
- City to post notices online and through robocalls; QR-coded survey signs to be used.
- Interactive Mill River Park webpage launched with story map and public survey (75+ responses).

Mill River Park – Concept Overview

- Nine-acre waterfront site; proposed features include:
- Outdoor public pool (first in the city).
- Pedestrian bridges and connecting trails.
- Direct public waterfront access for recreation.
- Design refinements to follow based on public feedback and feasibility.

River Street and Housing Development

- Upcoming mixed-use concept for 10-acre site: 840 housing units, 30,000 sq. ft. retail, and 430–500 parking spaces.
- Ground level for retail and parking; housing above.
- Goal to balance density with flood-elevation and design standards.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Additional Project and Work Plan Updates

- Tweed Airport East Terminal nearing final state review (DEEP); hopeful construction will begin soon thereafter.
- Gilbane Project (State Street) DLDA approved; announcement pending.
- State Street redesign tied to enabling infrastructure funding.
- Surplus Schools (West Hills and Quinnipiac East) RFPs to be issued via OpenGov for redevelopment.

Events and Announcements

- New Haven Grand Prix & Pizza Fest upcoming; aiming for world record for World's Largest Pizza Party.
- YIMBY Town National Housing Conference scheduled in New Haven (Sept 14–15, 2025).
- Chestnut Fine Foods closing after 40 years; proclamation to be issued.
- Fussy Coffee closure noted; city assisting workers through DOL resources.

DISCUSSION

Adjournment

Commissioners commended progress and transparency.

Revised presentation to be circulated via email.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously.