



Robert F. Sullivan  
Mayor

# CITY OF BROCKTON

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning Board

Historical Commission

Conservation Commission

Robert May, CEcD  
Director

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - 6:00 PM

Notice is hereby given that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Brockton Economic Development Committee was held on Thursday evening September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00PM in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 45 School Street, Brockton, MA. The members present were Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr., Councilor Winthrop Farwell Jr., Councilor Moises M. Rodrigues, Councilor Jeffrey A. Thompson, and Councilor Shirley Asack. Also present were business owners: Tony and Manuel Rodrigues, President of the Downtown Brockton Association (DBA): Mary Waldron, Ms. Debbie representing Tamboo Bistro, Director of Planning and Economic Development: Rob May, and Administrative Assistant to the Committee: Rhode Germain.

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Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr. asked for an update on the Sycamore Grove project being proposed by the City of Brockton and according to the Planning Department Director: Rob May, the City hired land surveyors to properly verify the property lines and are expected to send a preliminary report in the next 10 days. Director Rob May also mentioned that Daniel Pallota (not present in the meeting) was charged with managing the Sycamore Grove project and would be the point of contact going forward.

Councilor Winthrop Farwell Jr. questioned the old city agreements regarding using these properties and wants to make sure the City is factoring and honoring these agreements while proceeding with the project.

Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr. confirmed that all councilors are in favor of the development of the Sycamore Grove but all businesses need to be part of the project whose goal

is to beautify the City of Brockton. The Chairperson also wants the involvement of the younger generation.

Councilor Jeffrey A. Thompson also emphasized the importance of the project. However, he confirmed that the parking concern raised by the property/business owners was a legitimate concern. Councilor Winthrop Farwell proposed that the City can remedy the problem by providing free parking for the first 3 hours of usage to encourage people to come Downtown.

The president of the Downtown Brockton Association (DBA): Mary Waldron supports the Sycamore Grove project and stated the DBA is ready to work together with the City for the project to come to fruition before the funds expire.

According to Director Rob May, the project is expected to be completed by next Fall and the funds should be allocated in 2025 and funds expanded by 2027.

Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr. stated that the subcommittee is a tool to help constituents voice their opinion and he is hoping that it can help keep things on track. He also affirmed that although everyone won't be able to get everything they want, it can be a win-win.

Tony Rodrigues, co-owner of Cristal, believes the Sycamore Grove project is preventing him from getting the proposed renovation of his property approved. He also doesn't believe there is sufficient parking to support the influx of people the Sycamore Grove project will bring in Downtown Brockton. However, he is willing to support the Sycamore Grove project but wants it redesigned. Tony Rodrigues also raised his concern with the lack of communication between the business/property owners and Daniel Pallota.

Ms. Debbie representing Tamboo Bistro also confirmed that the owner of Tamboo was also looking for transparency and communication around the project.

Councilor Shirley Asack affirmed the importance of keeping the line of communication open so that the business owners can feel included and their concerns be addressed.

According to Director Rob May, the City adjusted the property lines so they can accommodate requests from the property owners. He also added that the City will accommodate Tamboo Restaurant's request for more space.

Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr. stated it was important for the City to be cleaned before the Sycamore project can begin.

Councilor Jeffrey A. Thompson questioned if the homeless issue in the City was an issue this committee should address. According to Director Rob May, it's a public safety issue. However,

Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr. thinks it's an Economic Development issue as well and thus should be added to the meeting agenda.

Councilor Moises M. Rodrigues stated that this committee is supposed to be agenda-less so that they can discuss any project that can help better the life of the city. Councilor Moises M. Rodrigues agrees that the bridges facilitate the homeless problem in the city but he also acknowledges that the homeless conduct is also an issue. According to Councilor Moises M. Rodrigues, 70% of the homeless are not from the City of Brockton but are here to receive social services. He also stated that the city should encourage people not to enable the homeless by giving them money. He also believes that the Sycamore Grove project should not start before the city addresses the homeless problem otherwise it will affect the project. Councilor Moises M. Rodrigues believes that police presence might help with the homelessness issue.

Councilor Jeffrey A. Thompson stated the importance of finding a way to fund the homeless issue since it has become such an eyesore for the city. Councilor Jeffrey A. Thompson mentioned that he has been working with some people to develop a plan to start a program that can hire homeless people to pick up trash.

Councilor Winthrop Farwell Jr. questioned if the bridges were national landmarks to which Director May answered no.

Director Rob May mentioned the potential of losing bank funds due to the panhandling problem in the City. Councilor Shirley Asack affirmed that these pedestrians have rights, however, she believes it's the councilors rights to protect the law-abiding citizens as well.

Mary Waldron mentioned hosting a monthly Community Coffee meeting at Elvera's Cafe to discuss similar concerns raised by the Executive Committee and coming up with solutions. She also mentioned that she will be sharing a survey with the councilors. Councilor Jeffrey A. Thompson also encouraged everyone to attend the Community Coffee meeting.

Tony Rodrigues mentioned the creation of a corporation called Sycamore Grove Property Owners Association and asked that the association have a say in every decision pertaining to the Sycamore Grove project.

Councilor Shirley Asack wants everyone to work together with all malls in the city and not only downtown because they also face the homeless issue.

Councilor Winthrop Farwell Jr. requested that Director Rob May provide a list of grants and their timeline to the Executive Committee.

Councilor/Chairperson Thomas J. Minichiello Jr. requested the agenda for the Economic Development meeting remain generic so it's easier to brainstorm ideas and requested that the Director May report to the Council once a month.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 12th, 6:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM

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