

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2009 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman Brian Miller, Justin Adinolfi (departed at 8:30 a.m.), Lelah Campo (departed at 8:40 a.m.), Bea Fiorino, Richard Kaplan and Thomas Scannell

Commissioners Absent:

Kathleen Gannon

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Bob DeJongh, Liaison for the Inland / Wetlands Commission; John Lesky, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Liaison (arrived at 7:40 a.m.); Patricia Aesif, Vice President of Logistics and Operations for Macy's (departed at 7:50 a.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 21, 2009 Regular Meeting

MOTION by Mr. Adinolfi that the minutes from the July 21, 2009 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as presented. **SECONDED** by Ms. Fiorino.

VOTE: In Favor – Adinolfi, Campo, Fiorino, Kaplan, Miller and Scannell
Opposed – None

The motion passed 6 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Letter of July 30, 2009 from State Senator Caligiuri to Chairman Miller

Commissioners reviewed the letter referenced above from Senator Caligiuri.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Presentation Re: Macy's Logistics

Ms. Aesif, Vice President of Logistics and Operations for Macy's, was present to speak to the Commission this morning. After many name changes, what is now called Macy's, came to Cheshire 22 years ago as Bloomingdales by Mail. The Industrial Park facility is the Northeast location for internet and store fulfillment for area Macy's stores, offering next day order delivery. In addition to the Knotter Drive location, Macy's has an additional 400,000 square feet that they lease on West Johnson Avenue, which was just extended with a 5-year lease.

Ms. Aesif stated that while sales are down 8% since last year in the stores, the .com (internet) sales are up 15% over last year. Internet products are priced the same as in the stores and Macy's now offers the use of coupons on line. Ms. Aesif stated that the bridal business is the fastest growing division in the industry.

Currently Macy's has just under 600 employees but they are hoping to grow to between 1,000 and 1,100 for the holiday shopping season. Macy's will be starting their 24-hour operations this Saturday, with the expectation that they will be handling approximately 80,000 units each day during the height of the holiday season. Most of the employees at this Macy's location are warehouse pickers and work on order fulfillments. The majority of the employees come from Waterbury but Macy's is currently trying to reach out to Meriden, with the help of a proposed new bus line. Currently there is a bus that comes almost directly from the Waterbury town green to Knotter Drive, no matter what the weather is. In addition, Macy's is looking to recruit more mothers, offering a 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. part time shift, for the holiday season.

Mr. Sitko offered to draft a letter of support from the Economic Development Commission for the proposed bus line into Meriden, to which Ms. Aesif was very thankful for.

Chairman Miller asked Ms. Aesif how Macy's likes being in Cheshire? Ms. Aesif responded by saying that there has been a phenomenal relationship between Macy's and Mr. Sitko over the years. Cheshire is a great location in comparison to where Macy's northeast customers are located, making shipping to the customers pretty easy.

Commissioners commented that it is nice to hear about a company growing, with so many companies struggling and closing in this economy.

Chairman Miller thanked Ms. Aesif for attending this morning's Economic Development Commission meeting.

B) Meetings with Cheshire companies

Mr. Sitko suggested invited the new Headmaster at Cheshire Academy to a future Economic Development Commission meeting.

C) ICMA E-Conference

Mr. Sitko stated that Town Manager Milone is a member of ICMA and there is an e-conference this morning, starting with a keynote speaker from 8:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. Commissioner members may stop by room 210 if they would like to listen in after this meeting.

D) Pratt & Whitney

Mr. Sitko talked about the upcoming decision due from Pratt & Whitney regarding whether or not their Cheshire and East Hartford facilities will be closing. There are approximately 800 employees in the Cheshire plant and 200 in the East Hartford plant. The union has made concessions, going into the multi-millions, as well as offers from the State in attempts to persuade Pratt & Whitney from leaving Connecticut. In addition, Cheshire has been active on many fronts with letters of support and encouraging letters from surrounding towns, where the majority of Pratt & Whitney employees live. Mr. Sitko stated that the Chamber of Commerce, Town Council Chairman Hall and Town Manager Milone have all written letters in support of keeping the Cheshire plant open. In addition Senator Chris Murphy and Representative Elizabeth Esty have been very active in trying to keep Pratt & Whitney in Connecticut.

Mr. Sitko noted that Pratt & Whitney's 300,000 square foot facility on Knotter Drive is in good shape, should it need to find a new owner. He also mentioned that in 1983 Pratt & Whitney talked about leaving Connecticut, but ended up staying after the threat of a lawsuit, if they left the State.

E) Focus Group Meetings

Chairman Miller stated that the first Focus Group meeting was held in July and included home-based businesses. The next Focus Group will be held on October 13th at either 7:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. and will include retailers and restaurant owners. Mr. Sitko stated that 1 or 2 Commission members are also welcomed to attend the meeting. Chairman Miller commented that Sheldon Dill did a great job leading the discussion at the last meeting.

F) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvements Project Update

Mr. Adinolfi reported that the West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Subcommittee is closer to going out to bid on the work that is needed west of the culvert to Deepwood Drive. The remaining work will not begin until after the culvert is replaced, which is scheduled for the Summer of 2011. In addition, the island of refuge for pedestrians crossing West Main Street will need to be constructed.

Mr. Sitko commented that Strollo's is doing some remediation work on West Main Street currently and as part of the final stages of their project, they will be starting some of the proposed streetscape work, which includes new aprons and sidewalks.

Ms. Campo noted that the Subcommittee has decided to order all of the exterior lighting for this project at one time to insure that all the same lighting will be used.

G) Incentive Policy

Mr. Sitko stated that the current Incentive Policy expires June 30, 2011 and has asked the Commissioners to start looking casually at the Policy to fine tune it. He will be gathering information to see what the competing towns are offering as well. Chairman Miller asked to have a hypothetical building comparison done between surrounding towns with regards to sewer connection / capacity fees. Mr. Sitko stated that he would bring the comparisons to the next Economic Development Commission meeting.

H) Small Business Forum of Cheshire Chamber of Commerce

Mark Thomas, of Cavoda, has invited either Mr. Sitko or a member of the Economic Development Commission to speak at an upcoming event that will be held at Cheshire Academy. The Chamber of Commerce is running a "Small Business Forum" on October 22nd in an effort to bring the Chamber, the Town and small business owners together. Mr. Sitko commented that he thought it would be a good idea to participate in the event. Chairman Miller stated that he would possibly be available to attend the Forum.

I) Liaison Reports

Mr. DeJongh, Liaison for the Inland / Wetlands Commission, stated that his commission has had a quiet Summer but added that there has been some challenges in Town with all the rain this season. He commented that the Town is doing a great job with their manhole rehabilitation project, including the great display located in the Town Hall lobby, which explains the project.

Ms. Fiorino commented that the Town Beautification Committee voted on the top Adopt-a-Spot location and has chosen Dietrich Gardens' location on the corner of Route 10 and Country Club Road. Mr. Sitko talked about the Town Beautification

Committee project to dress up the main entrance area of Town Hall with decorative walls and plantings.

Mr. Lesky, Liaison from the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, commented that the Chamber's Golf Tournament was held in July and was a great success as was the Fall Festival, which was held this past weekend and has become quite a tradition in Town.

J) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that Alexion Pharmaceuticals is going to be taking over space in the Industrial Park, where Protocol used to be, for their own temporary call center operation. He also reported that Action Sports will be closing their Cheshire location.

Consignment Originals has moved into the former CVS location in Cheshire Shopping Center; Consignment Originals has been in business since 1982. A recent article in the Cheshire Herald noted that Cheshire Nursery is the oldest business in Town.

Mr. Sitko has been working on writing a \$250,000 grant request to help finance the Linear Trail extension from Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street. Mr. DeJongh commented that the former Ball & Socket building on West Main Street is a great building and could be a wonderful development centerpiece for the Linear Trail and West Main Street area.

Mr. Sitko stated that Parks & Recreation Director, Bob Ceccolini, and Town Manager Milone had an intern conduct a traffic study at Cheshire High School, which has resulted in the following suggestion being made. The preliminary idea is to move the tennis courts, which will be due to be re-surfaced soon, across the street to Bartlem Park and then turn the tennis courts into parking spots, on school grounds, which would eliminate the students from crossing Route 10 twice a day, disrupting the traffic.

Mr. Sitko included a recent article about W/S Development recently opening up a new Lifestyle Center in Massachusetts, in this meeting's packet.

I) Other

Mr. Scannell asked if there was an estimate of the number of home-based businesses in Town? Mr. Sitko replied that there are probably 100's, but that may even be a low estimate as there is no formal reporting required to the Town.

Mr. DeJongh stated that on October 1st from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. at the Farms Country Club his company, NEI Financial, LLC, would be sponsoring an Economic Forum with a panel discussion entitled "Are we there yet?". Mr. DeJongh invited any interested Commission member to attend.

Ms. Fiorino stated that this would be her last meeting with the Economic Development Commission, as she will be moving out of Town. Commissioners all commented that they were sorry to hear she would be leaving the Commission. Mr. Sitko noted that Ms. Fiorino has been a member of the Economic Development Commission since 1987. Chairman Miller thanked Ms. Fiorino for her numerous years of service on behalf of this Commission.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Fiorino to adjourned the meeting at 8:46 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Scannell.

VOTE: In Favor – Fiorino, Kaplan, Miller and Scannell
Opposed – None

The motion passed 4 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary