

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, October 17, 2017
7:30 a.m. – Room 207/209 – Town Hall

Commissioners Present:

David Pelletier, Derek Gromko, Steve Sidoruk, Don Dobbs, William Stanley

Commissioner Absent:

Dan O'Connell

Peter Nichols

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Guest:

Al Vagnini, Powerstation

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting – September 12, 2017

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the September 12, 2017 special meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted.

SECONDED by Mr. Sidoruk.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Communications

- a) Topics will be covered under the 2017 Work Plan and Update of the FY 17-18 Budget.

VII. Business

- b) Discussion with Powerstation

Al Vagnini, founder, president and chief executive officer of Powerstation, discussed the history and growth of his company. Powerstation has been in business since 1983, employs 35 full-time and part-time people and specializes in entertainment for weddings, bar & bat mitzvahs, corporate and special family events. Services include DJ, video, photography, lighting, staging and sound. To date, upwards of 30,000 events have been served by Powerstation. Mr. Vagnini shared stories about the beginning to present, noting that a landmark for his business is VR Osteria. He is grateful for the positive support displayed by Mr. Sitko and the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Vagnini commented that a mix of businesses in the north end is good. He likes the north end location and access to I-691, 84 and 91 corridor. He also believes that there is untapped potential in town.

- c) Speakers for Future Meetings

ConnStep in Rocky Hill helps businesses in Connecticut find opportunities for growth and bottom line improvements.

Bozzuto's was also suggested for a future speaker.

- d) 2017 Work Plan Update

The Report on Cheshire Economy was well received. It was presented to the town council on October 10 and posted on the town's website. It was posted on the Chamber website on October 6.

Messrs. Milone, Oris, Pelletier, Gromko, Stanley, Sitko, Voelker and Kurtz (EJ) met on September 29 to follow up on the recommendations from the Arnett Muldrow Report. Another meeting is scheduled on October 27.

No council discussion on building permit fees and the incentive policy recommendation has taken place.

Arnett Talbot is spearheading the redesign of the website. The group has been meeting 2–3 times monthly. Target date for completion is November/December.

Capital budget request of \$1,350,000 for water service extension for the Interchange Zone is set for referendum on November 7. Messrs. Sitko, Gancarz and Milone met with Regional Water Authority (RWA) to discuss the possibility of cost sharing for proposed water main extension for Interchange Zone on September 21st.

TIF proposals have been submitted by Arnett Muldrow and Camoin Associates. A discussion took place noting the following comments:

The charge for the Arnett Muldrow project will be \$125/hour not to exceed \$15,000. Travel expenses for three trips will not exceed \$3,600.

The charge for the Camoin project will be a fixed fee of \$22,500. This fee covers all costs and expenses for services in the Scope of Services including three site visits.

The market study has been completed by Arnett Muldrow and they know what the EDC is looking to do. They have worked on TIF districts for municipalities.

Camoin has worked on TIF districts in Connecticut communities: Canton, New Britain, Suffield, and Groton. They are knowledgeable of Connecticut's new TIF legislation (Public Act. No. 15-57).

If Camoin (Jim Damicis/team) are in Connecticut in November, it would be beneficial to invite them to the EDC meeting to get additional input regarding the project.

The EDC needs to decide where and how much property to include in a TIF district.

Mr. Sitko will call the Town of Canton to ask about its experience with Camoin.

The first priority is the establishment of a TIF, rather than establishing a development agency/commission. Mr. Sitko included the CCM research in today's package. The package includes a list of current development agencies. The term "redevelopment" is commonly used to define these agencies and appears in agency names.

The STEAP grant application for \$500,000 for trail parking near West Main Street submitted in April is on hold. A decision about funding will be made at a future town council meeting.

Mr. Sitko requested a revised proposal from the CT Main Street Center to include all commercial areas, not just West Main Street.

e) FY 17-18 Budget

The inability of the state to reach an agreement on a two-year budget has produced a potential revenue shortfall of \$3.8 million and this amount may not be restored. Contingency plans are being prepared with a 5 percent reduction in spending for economic development. Funding for Business Appreciation Day, a popular and successful event hosted every two years, may not be held.

f) Liaison Reports

Mr. Gromko said that the Fall Festival was successful and that the Octoberfest is taking place on October 23, 2017 from 5:00 – 8:00 pm.

g) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported on the following projects:

- Ball & Socket Arts

The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) has permitted the town to use \$750,000 for remediation of phase 1 of the project. The town attorney is currently working on agreements with DECD and Ball & Socket Arts.

- Elim Park Baptist Home

Elim Park's president, Ron Dischinger, has retired after 40 years. His successor, Brian Bedford, praised Mr. Dischinger for his service stating that "You don't appreciate the history and expertise of these people until you live and work with that generation of people who have contributed so much to society as a whole."

Ricci Construction will be relocating to 986 South Main Street, the former site of CITGO Gas Station. The Planning and Zoning Commission approved a new 4,300 SF two-story office building.

- John Ricci – 4,300 SF office building/incentive

Mr. Ricci has applied for incentive assistance for this project. Additional businesses will occupy the building.

- Amazon's second corporate headquarters

Mr. Sitko submitted a detailed proposal for consideration to the State Department of Economic and Community Development for Amazon's second corporate headquarters. Several sites are currently under consideration in Stamford and Hartford.

- Council candidates and economic development

Council candidates seeking seats on the town council have different ideas regarding development in the north end of town. Mr. Sitko included an article from the Cheshire Herald, dated September 28, 2017, which summarizes candidates' ideas for future economic development.

- Outlet Shoppes at Rentschler Field

Construction will begin on a retail center at Rentschler Field. The center will include 70 leading fashion and lifestyle retailers occupying 282,000 square feet of leasable space.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Guite, Recording Secretary, EDC