

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 16, 2018
7:30 a.m. – Room 207/209 – Town Hall

Commissioners Present:

David Pelletier, William Stanley, Derek Gromko, Don Dobbs, Peter Nichols

Commissioners Absent:

Dan O'Connell, Steve Sidoruk

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Guests:

Patti Flynn-Harris, Cheshire Town Council Liaison

E.J. Kurtz, Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman

Jeff Natale, Planning and Zoning Commission Member

Michael Ceccorulli, Attorney with Pullman & Comley

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman 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 – December 19, 2017

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the December 19, 2017 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted.

SECONDED by Mr. Nichols

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Communications

- a) Topics will be covered under the 2017 Work Plan.

VII. Business

- a) Mr. Stanley introduced Mike Ceccorulli to the Commissioners and Guests.

Mike Ceccorulli, Cheshire resident and attorney with Pullman & Comley, specializing in real estate, land use and commercial financing, discussed how some municipalities have made planning and zoning key strategies in their economic development planning. A presentation and CT Law Tribune article written by Attorney Ceccorulli, were distributed to the commissioners. Attorney Ceccorulli has worked with Waterbury, Southington and Windsor on their zoning initiatives. Waterbury adopted new zoning regulations that established a flexible framework for land use applications throughout the city. One feature was an administrative review process for permitted commercial uses which reduced timeframes for obtaining entitlements. Focus on interdepartmental communication, cooperation and accountability has perpetuated business development.

Southington has seen a rise in retail development along Queen Street and West Street. The town's political culture focuses on pro-business and economic growth. It holds regular meetings which include elected officials and designated representatives from town departments, agencies and commissions. Prospective new businesses have the opportunity to meet with town representatives to get assurances for their anticipated zoning process and timeframes for entitlements. The planning department's goal is to facilitate the review and approval of new site plan applications. Businesses seem to appreciate the simplicity and the partnering of government and business.

Through its weekly forum, Windsor is able to initiate discussion about entitlements with developers. The forum consists of members from the town manager's office, economic development, planning and others to discuss prospective development with interested parties to provide guidance on the anticipated development process. This collaborative approach makes it possible to provide strong assurances regarding entitlements and incentives to finalize the deal.

Attorney Ceccorulli suggested best practices focusing on challenges that municipalities currently face. Tax incentives alone are insufficient in drawing and retaining business in municipalities. Factors influencing business location and development are public infrastructure, geography,

demographics, taxes and regulatory environment – land use/zoning. Success in attracting new business to towns depends on the cooperation of municipal departments and officials working together with their economic development team. Zoning should match the market. Both businesses and municipal officials are often unaware of how businesses can affect local land use regulation, and, in turn, economic development. The best municipalities have realized profound growth opportunities that have permanently changed the trajectory of economic development in their communities.

Land use regulation can be the sole reason why a company chooses a particular municipality to locate its business. Rigid regulations, onerous restrictions, drawn-out approval processes subject to undue political or public interference are among the deterrents. Today municipalities have to fend for themselves and community leadership must realize every opportunity to encourage business development and enhance their Grand Lists.

b) Speakers for Future Meetings

New President of Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Yetta Augur will be invited to attend an EDC meeting.

c) 2018 Work Plan Update

Messrs. Milone, Oris, Pelletier, Gromko, Stanley, Sitko, Voelker and Kurtz (EJ) met on December 18 to follow up on planning and zoning and economic development recommendations from the Arnett Muldrow Report. Another meeting is scheduled later this month.

Internal workgroup continues to meet on the website redesign. Staff training began during the week of January 8. Target date for completion and going live is February/March. A suggestion was made to incorporate testimonials into the new website to show that Cheshire is business friendly.

Messrs. Sitko, Gancarz and Milone met with Regional Water Authority (RWA) officials to discuss the possibility of cost sharing for proposed water main extension for Interchange Zone on January 3. The RWA may share costs for designing the water main extension.

Mr. Sitko will approach the new chamber president about the possible participation in the CT Main Street program.

d) Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

A discussion took place regarding the TIF proposal presented by Camoin Associates. Mr. Damicis stated that revisions to the proposal will cost an additional \$1,250. Mr. Pelletier is not pleased with the additional fee.

MOTION by Mr. Stanley to proceed with the revisions to the TIF proposal by Camoin Associates at the original price of \$22,500.

SECONDED by Mr. Nichols. Approved unanimously.

e) Liaison Reports

Mr. Gromko announced that his term as president of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce is completed.

Mr. Kurtz said that zoning changes for the north end of town will be discussed later this month.

Ms. Flynn-Harris said that no timeframe was discussed at town council meeting for TIF. The EDC would like to be on the February town council agenda. He will ask Camoin to attend.

f) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported on the following projects:

- New Chamber of Commerce President

Yetta Augur is the new president of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce. She succeeds Sheldon Dill who plans to retire at the end of May.

She is "committed to growing the Chamber to better serve its members and the community." Ms. Augur currently serves on the chamber's board of directors.

- New Town Manager

Sean M. Kimball will succeed Michael A. Milone as town manager in May. Mr. Kimball currently serves as acting town manager and finance director in Simsbury. He was selected from a pool of 57 applicants from across the country. The search committee and town

council members “were very impressed with his financial knowledge, management style and personality, which will serve him well in the community.” Mr. Kimball calls this his “dream job” and is excited to lead and serve the town.

- FY 19 Budget

Mr. Sitko said that there will be no Business Appreciation Day scheduled this year or next year.

- Medical office building proposed for former location of Cheshire Cinema/Huxley Motors

Hartford Healthcare has confirmed that it is sponsoring the proposed medical facility along South Main Street which is expected to open in 2019. The state-of-the-art facility will house offices for primary care, dermatology, endocrinology, neurosciences, rehabilitation, cardiology, and a full-service imaging center. Other services may be added based on the needs of the community. A variety of trees and shrubs will be used as buffers for the surrounding area. The facility will be consistent with the town will show design merit.

- McGuire Manufacturing

Bead Industries has announced its first female CEO. Jill Bryant Mayer succeeds her father, Kenneth Bryant, who retired in 2014. She had served as corporate president since his retirement. Cheshire’s McGuire Manufacturing is a subsidiary of Bead Industries, Inc., which located in Milford.

- 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 completing agreements with DECD and Ball & Socket Arts.

- FoodWorks

FoodWorks Natural Market grocery will be closing at the end of the month. It has stores in Guilford and Old Saybrook.

- New Art Gallery in town

On Friday, January 12, the grand opening of The Voice of Art Gallery/Studio took place. The Voice of Art Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit art organization dedicated to creating art experiences that enrich lives of local residents and the surrounding communities. It is located at 2 Town Center Plaza and is run by Hannah Jung.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Guite, Recording Secretary, EDC