

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 20, 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:

Yetta Auger and Mark Thomas, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce

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 – January 16, 2018

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the January 16, 2018 regular meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted.

SECONDED by Mr. Nichols

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Communications

1. FOIA Information
2. Conflict of Interest Ordinance

Documents for both were distributed at today's meeting. Commissioners will reply to Mr. Sitko that they have reviewed the documents.

VII. Business

- a) Discussion with Yetta Auger, President of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Pelletier introduced Yetta Auger, President of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Auger distributed handouts with her forward vision for the chamber's growth and upcoming activities. She will be interacting heavily with the community, government affairs, local businesses, home-based and manufacturing businesses. She discussed a list of items needed to improve business development including upgrades to hardware and software. 16 businesses have become new chamber members in the last three weeks.

Where home-based businesses may have limited resources, the Chamber offers use of its office equipment and QuickBooks seminars free of charge. A suggestion was made that fees be charged for these activities.

Mr. Sitko mentioned Business Appreciation Day as an opportunity for recognizing local businesses and exploring opportunities for business development and networking. While the event will not take place this year, there is the hope that it will go forward in 2019.

- b) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko suggested inviting Brian Bedard to a future meeting. Mr. Bedard is the president of Elim Park. He also suggested inviting Bill Voelker to discuss possible zoning changes to the Route 10 corridor from Creamery Road to West Johnson Avenue and the Interchange Zone. Please contact Mr. Sitko with suggestions for speakers for the March and April meetings.

c) Tax Increment Financing

Now that the town council supports the EDC's recommendation for Camoin Associates to develop a TIF Master Plan and District, the details of a contract will be developed along with possibly appointing an advisory committee to oversee the planning, design and implementation of the Master Plan and District. The chamber was encouraged to become part of the advisory committee.

Planning ideas include promoting the benefits of TIF to the community; dispelling that there will be new taxes associated with the plan and inviting local press to attend meetings.

d) 2017 Grand List

Included in the meeting materials are memos from Michael Milone and Diane Waller, town assessor, explaining changes to the Grand List for 2017. Increases include personal property filings of 2017 Declarations from Park Assist and Nosal Builders for a combined increased value of \$1,488,770.

There was an increase in motor vehicle revenue due to completion of the five-year exemption period on new commercial vehicles which were added back onto the taxable Grand List.

There was a small increase in real estate which has been offset by properties that are now partially or fully exempt including 1550 Highland Avenue, 30 Fieldstone Court, 640 South Main Street, 575 N Brooksvale Road, and 185 Main Street.

Mr. Sitko anticipates more growth with the partial completion of Marbridge and the new Medical Building.

e) Liaison Reports

Mark Thomas said that the first meeting focusing on government affairs was held by the chamber.

f) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported on follow up activities to the Arnett Muldrow Report, including:

Messrs. Milone, Oris, Pelletier, Gromko, Stanley, Sitko, Voelker and Kurtz (EJ) met on September 29, December 18, and January 23. Possible changes to the Interchange Zone and Route 10 corridor from Creamery Road to West Johnson Avenue were discussed.

Internal workgroup continues to meet on the website redesign. Staff training was held during the week of January 8 with additional training anticipated. Target date for completion and going live is March/April.

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 September 21 and January 3. The RWA has expressed an interest in sharing costs for designing the water main extension.

The town attorney is completing work on agreements with DECD and Ball & Socket Arts.

STEAP grant application for \$500,000 for trail parking near West Main Street was submitted in April. The Town Council allocated \$400,000 for the parking area in the capital budget in December. Representative Linehan will look into the STEAP grant application.

A draft Potential Land Use Strategy for Highland Avenue Industrial Corridor was included with the meeting materials.

g) Other

- 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. A tax incentive application has been submitted.

- Marbridge Retirement Center

Marbridge Retirement Center will soon apply for building permits.

- Sweet Pea

Sweet Pea Restaurant on South Main Street has closed. It was a popular dining spot and was a member of the Chamber for several years. A deli/pizzeria will be moving to this location.

- Thomaston Feed

Thomaston Feed will expand its operation with a new and larger location in Mid-March. It will be moving into the Cheshire Shopping Center on South Main Street between Advance Auto Parts and Bagelicious. The new store will offer additional services including a “do it yourself dog wash” and seminars on pet nutrition.

- Online building permit system

Residents and contractors doing work in Cheshire can request permits online. Other efforts are planned to make the Building Department more convenient to use – more user friendly. Visitors to the building will be directed to a kiosk where permit applications can be submitted online.

- Newspaper articles regarding water main extension in Interchange Zone, economic development and retirement costs are included in the meeting materials.

- Remarks on the “Competitiveness” presentation was provided by Mr. Stanley was noted.

- Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting – February 22.

The annual meeting and retirement celebration for Sheldon Dill and recognition of Michael Milone will be held on February 22 at Aria in Prospect, CT beginning at 5:30 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Guite, Recording Secretary, EDC