

**REGULAR MEETING
CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 19, 2019
7:30 a.m. – Room 207/209 – Town Hall**

Commissioners Present:

David Pelletier, Derek Gromko, Don Dobbs, Dan O’Connell, William Stanley,
Peter Nichols, Steve Sidoruk

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Guests:

Julie Anderson, Cheshire Academy, 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 15, 2019

Mr. Stanley made a motion to accept minutes for Regular Meeting – January 15, 2019. Mr. Nichols seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI. Communications

1. Approved EDC Meeting Dates for 2019 – included in packet.
2. Mr. Sitko will cover topics in the coordinator’s report.

VII. Business

a) Discussion with Head of School, Julie Anderson, Cheshire Academy

Mr. Pelletier introduced, Julie Anderson, head of school – Cheshire Academy. Ms. Anderson joined the faculty of Cheshire Academy in 2003 and has held several positions. In May 2018 she was appointed head of school after serving as interim head of school since September 2017. She graduated from Wesleyan University with both a B.A. in Spanish and literature and an M.A. in Liberal Arts. She also holds an M.S. in Elementary and Middle School Education from Southern Connecticut State University.

Cheshire Academy has shown significant growth under Ms. Anderson in both courses that are offered and the students in its International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. She has assisted in launching the school's health and wellness program and the new faculty orientation program. A gift for the school was received during the interim head of school timeframe which will be used for a new community and performing arts center.

Ms. Anderson is honored to serve as the first female head of school, is learning a lot in this role, and finds joy in being part of any positive change for students, families, faculty and staff. Cheshire Academy will be celebrating its 225th anniversary this year with a celebration scheduled on June 8, 2019.

During the discussion, Ms. Anderson pointed out interesting facts about the school, including a brief history, famous alums, and enrollment facts and figures.

Students are encouraged to respect the town and to use its available resources and retail. Ms. Anderson would like Cheshire Academy to be recognized in town where it sometimes may be forgotten.

b) Speakers for Future Meetings

It was suggested to invite Brian Bedard, President, Elim Park, Viron Rondo, owner of Viron Rondo Osteria, and Joe Nosal, CEO/President of Nosal Builders on Fieldstone Court to future meetings. Please contact Mr. Sitko with suggestions for speakers at upcoming meetings.

c) Tax Increment Financing

The Planning & Zoning Commission will meet on Monday, February 25 at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the proposed Interchange Zone TIF District Master Plan and if it is consistent with the Plan of Conservation & Development.

d) Town Manager's Goals

Included in the packet are Mr. Kimball's proposed goals and objectives. There are five goals/objectives in the packet. Specific to economic development is supporting strategic and targeted efforts to grow the town's grand list, and to lessen the tax burden on residents and existing businesses while maintaining the town's quality of life, identity and sense of place.

e) Legislative Recommendations

Included in the packet are legislative recommendations for the General Assembly. Recommendations were developed from discussions with town staff, meetings at the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and other towns. A few recommendations were carried over from last year.

f) New Leadership at CT Department of Economic & Community Development

Governor Lamont is nominating David Lehman, a partner with Goldman Sachs, to serve in dual roles as the commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development and as the governor's senior economic advisor.

g) Grand List 2018

Mr. Kimball announced the net for the Grand List for October 1, 2018. The 0.83% increase is reflected in real estate, personal property, and motor vehicles. Property owners wishing to appeal must submit a prescribed form to the Cheshire Board of Assessment Appeals by February 20, 2019.

Forms are available online at www.cheshirect.org or from the Assessor's Office in Town Hall.

h) Liaison Reports

Mark Thomas, from the Chamber of Commerce, reported that there will be a ribbon cutting on February 27 for Chesapeake Technology, 396 South Main Street. The Home Health and Garden Show will take place on March 23.

i) Coordinator's Report

- Credit Rating Presentations – Fitch Ratings document was included for information in the meeting package. The town's high credit rating was maintained.
- Former Service Station at North Brooksvale Road and Route 10. Royal Visions Management & Investments, a New York company, is planning to renovate the former service station and turn it into a convenience store. The town planner wants architectural elevations from the developer with the hope that the look of this location will be improved. The company applied for a special permit to replace the garage with retail. The Planning and Zoning Commission has requested more detailed drawings. P&Z will meet again to discuss the application.
- Highland Avenue Overlay District
Commissioners hope that the overlay district will bring new growth along Highland Avenue. If the district is implemented, developers will be able to take a "design-as-you-go approach" following a master plan that is supported by the Planning and Zoning Commission and based upon a preliminary review. This will allow developers to build properties that are different from current standards. Everything must be approved by the planning commission so that there is continuity and traffic congestion minimized.
- This year's Business Appreciation Day will be held at Elim Park. Mr. Pelletier and Mr. Sitko will coordinate activity for the event. Jim Smith, former president of Webster Bank, was mentioned as a speaker. A date in June will be confirmed.

- Watch Factory and Waverly Inn Restaurants are on the market. Both were listed for sale by their owners and are available for review on the BizQuest website. The Waverly Inn cites personal issues as a reason for selling and the Watch Factory's owner is retiring.
- Local Restaurants and Chesprocott Health District
An article about some local restaurants and health inspections was included in the packet.
- Ball & Socket Arts is working with SHPO on plans to restore the exterior siding of the wooden building.

Other

Mr. O'Connell made comments about doing business in Cheshire including what drives and maintains business. Now that Amazon has decided against a location in New York, Connecticut towns should pitch to be in the mix. State representatives and/or senators should be invited to EDC meetings to be informed about what is happening in Cheshire from a business standpoint including challenges, strengths and weaknesses. Prior to invitations, the EDC should brainstorm on what the town needs so it can drive the conversation. There needs to be order to the process. Legislators in the 5th congressional district can provide support if they partner with the town and EDC. Cheshire should consider getting an electronic .gov domain that will reach legislators.

In addition, Mr. O'Connell recommended that the EDC look at towns across the country, regionally and with similar cultures that are experiencing economic growth to get ideas. Cheshire can benefit by thinking out of the box. Mr. O'Connell will research studies showing growth (data.gov). Growth can be achieved without inhibiting aesthetics that showcase the town. Electronic media should be employed to promote positive public relations highlighting investments made in Cheshire.

IX. Adjournment

Mr. Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Guite, Recording Secretary, EDC