

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2011 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Kathleen Gannon, Brian Miller, David Orsini, Robert Sepp and William Stanley

Commissioner Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

William Freitag, Chamber of Commerce Liaison; Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner

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

It was determined that a quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 20, 2011

MOTION by Ms. Gannon that the minutes from the September 20, 2011 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted with a correction noting that there was a quorum for the meeting. **SECONDED** by Mr. Orsini.

VOTE: In Favor – Gannon, Miller, Orsini, Pelletier, Sepp and Stanley
Opposed – None

The motion passed 6 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Economic Development Commission.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Work Plan for 2012

Commissioners had been given the Tolland Economic Development Action Plan that Commissioner Miller developed so they could review and discuss it during this meeting. Mr. Miller explained that every town is different. His company met with representatives from Tolland about 10 years ago to first develop this plan and then recently met again to review and update the Action Plan for Tolland.

Chairman Pelletier noted that a lot of areas this Commission has addressed and continues to address over time are covered in this report. Commissioners talked about the Interchange Zone restrictions that have been in place in Cheshire for many years and nothing has happened. There was some discussion about coming up with suggestions to recommend to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the Interchange Zone. Mr. Sitko replied that this Commission could make suggestions and see how the Planning and Zoning Commission receive it.

Mr. Miller talked about the debate between retail vs. industrial uses for land. He agrees that it is a good idea to look at that area of Town. Ms. Gannon commented that she has been on 3 different ad hoc groups to discuss the Interchange Zone and there has been a lot of back and forth. There were some changes made to the Regulations to adjust for the proposed Lifestyle Center by W. S. Development.

Mr. Sepp suggested putting together some historical data regarding industrial vs. residential vs. commercial, to which Mr. Sitko said he would work on.

Ms. Gannon commented that the property owners in that area of Town have constrained the development in the Interchange Zone, too. They want to sell it all together and not split the land up.

Mr. Hostage suggested contacting the local universities, such as Yale, Quinnipiac and the University of Connecticut to ask, "What can Cheshire do to help them and be part of their development and expansion". Mr. Miller commented that it might be a good idea to develop a more formalized relationship with the local schools.

Ms. Gannon talked about focusing on mass-transportation options throughout Town and the ability to walk in Town.

Mr. Miller suggested looking at the strength and weaknesses of Cheshire, which will lead to a work program where Mr. Sitko can capitalize on what's already here in Town instead of focusing on what's not here. Mr. Sitko agreed, stating that he doesn't know if the Interchange Zone is where to focus a lot of energy because a lot of the restraints are out of the Town's hands.

Chairman Pelletier questioned if the Regulations make sense or if they are tweaked, will it spur something to happen? Mr. Orsini asked if the property owners from the Interchange Zone have come to the Town to ask for changes to the Regulations? Mr. Sitko replied no they have not; W.S. Development was the last to propose changes to the Interchange Zone Regulations. Ms. Gannon commented that if someone really wants to develop in that area, they would come forward with proposed changes. She added that she is willing to review the Planning and Zoning Regulations again as part of a subcommittee, if it will help.

Chairman Pelletier suggested that the Commission review Mr. Sitko's summary report from the various Focus Group meetings and then talk more about a work plan for Cheshire.

Mr. Sitko commented that we don't want to neglect the present companies in Town and it says a lot for the Town to support them.

Mr. Freitag asked about the status of W.S. Development's proposed project for the Interchange Zone? Mr. Sitko replied that it is dormant / stalled right now. There was an adjustment to the Regulations, which says there can be no more than 2 bedroom apartments in the proposed development, so that it limits the impact on Cheshire's school system.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that he is still hoping to have Catherine Smith, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and/or Dan Esty, Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to a future Economic Development Commission meeting.

C) Focus Group Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that the final focus group meeting with landscapers and contractors was held on October 6th and a summary of the meeting was in the packet for Commissioners to review. The biggest concern to come out of the meeting with the

landscapers and contractors is the permitting process in Cheshire, which they would like to see more streamlined and more coordination between departments.

A draft of the wrap up report for all the Focus Groups will be available at the next meeting for Commissioners to review and then a presentation will be made to the Town Council.

D) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project

Mr. Sitko stated that Yankee Gas still has just re-surfaced the roadway where last year's gas line extension work occurred on West Main Street and Main Street.

The phase 2 contractor, Clover Construction, has been working to make some adjustments to Phase 1 of the West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement project. The State is working re-engineer the culvert replacement, which will not take place until next year due to drainage issues. Mr. Sitko is trying to have the light fixtures installed before winter, but without powering them up yet.

E) Economic Development Activity Update

Mr. Sitko spoke at a Chamber of Commerce event last month to discuss economic development activity that has been happening in Cheshire over the last 8 months.

F) Pratt & Whitney Property

Mr. Sitko stated that he and the Tax Assessor, Mario Panagrossi, visited the Pratt & Whitney property on Knotter Drive recently to verify that most of the equipment has been removed from the property; the building is almost vacant now. With regards to taxes that will be lost, Cheshire is still supposed to get the PILOT funding from the State, which is great news. There will be a loss of an estimated \$40,000 in personal property taxes but if the PILOT money were lost, it would have been approximately a \$160,000 loss.

Mr. Sitko stated that the Defense Zone legislation will be discussed at next month's Town Council meeting.

G) Liaison Reports

Mr. Freitag, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce liaison had nothing new to report.

H) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that UTC recently acquired Goodrich Corporation, which has a location on Knotter Drive in Cheshire. The plant employees about 400

people in the former Bendex / BAE location and it is hopeful they will be staying here in Cheshire.

Alexion Pharmaceuticals continues to expand; Mr. Sitko reported that a recent news article was in this meeting's packet for Commissioners to review.

The Ball and Socket property has seen some interest in it by a variety of sources. The property is for sale for approximately \$1.2 million.

Mr. Sitko talked about the Brownfield Program of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, which is a loan program for development projects. The Town could get a loan for remediation work on local property. Mr. Sitko mentioned that this program has been brought to Dalton's attention, adding that some remediation work has occurred on the Ball & Socket property but he is not sure to what level.

I) Other

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Orsini to adjourned the October 18th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:30 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Miller.

VOTE: In Favor – Gannon, Miller, Orsini, Pelletier, Sepp and Stanley
Opposed – None

The motion passed 6 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary