

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioner Absent:

Kathleen Gannon

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

William Freitag, Chamber of Commerce Liaison; Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison; Craig Goldstein, Owner of Cheshire Fitness Zone (departed at 7:50 a.m.)

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 – October 18, 2011

MOTION by Mr. Orsini that the minutes from the October 18, 2011 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Pelletier.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Economic Development Commission.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Cheshire Fitness Zone

Mr. Sitko introduced Craig Goldstein, Owner of Cheshire Fitness Zone to the Commission. Cheshire Fitness Zone is a pediatric therapy and fitness center for kids of all abilities. The company has been in business for 11 years and is currently located in the Watch Factory where they offer physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy for children of all abilities in house or at local schools. They also work with Elim Park to provide aquatic therapy there at their facility, for the past 3 years. Some of the fitness classes for kids are weight management, sports training for individuals and/or teams.

Cheshire Fitness Zone currently employees around 20 people, not all full time, 15 of which are therapists. Mr. Goldstein stated that he his looking to expand his business and relocate to 382 South Main Street where he hopes to have the buildings on the property taken down and a new, 2-story therapy center will be built, hopefully being ready a year from now.

Mr. Miller asked what Mr. Goldstein thinks attributes to the expansion of therapy and fitness centers, lately? Mr. Goldstein replied fitness as a whole. He explained that Cheshire Fitness for Women operated in their facility up until a month ago, when they moved with PTN to the Everybody's plaza. Cheshire Fitness Center really has a niche business; no one else in Town really offers these services for kids.

Chairman Pelletier asked if they are seeing a larger number of sports related injuries? Mr. Goldstein replied yes, probably due to physical fitness as a whole due to video games and kids not being as active as they used to be. Also, kids are pushed really hard at a young age and their bodies may not be mechanically ready to take on that challenge.

Mr. Sepp asked if Cheshire Fitness Center has outgrown its current location? Mr. Goldstein replied that their current space is not completely adaptable for the kids with disabilities. He also would like the opportunity to own and invest in his company rather than to pay rent to someone else. The new facility will have an elevator for easy access to the 2nd floor and will be constructed to be easier to get around.

Mr. Sitko noted that Cross Fit, which is currently located at 382 South Main Street, will be moving into the former Nutmeg building on Highland Avenue, near Brix. Mr. Goldstein noted that he is still working with Planning and Zoning to review and finalize this plans. Mr. Sitko commented that Mr. Goldstein has been a good guy to work with, adding that he has mentioned that he would like to apply for tax incentives, when this project moves forward.

Mr. Miller asked if Mr. Goldstein if he his having any problems with being a Cheshire business and if there is anything this Commission could help him with? Mr. Goldstein replied no, working with the Town has been nice; the staff has been very supportive and helpful. Mr. Goldstein added that his only concern is to spread the word of his business, through word of mouth. Cheshire Fitness Center helps kids from birth to 21 years old; most of the clients are under 13 years old.

Members thanked Mr. Goldstein for coming to speak to the Commission this morning.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that Catherine Smith, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development has accepted an invitation to attend the January Economic Development Commission meeting. Mr. Sitko suggested inviting the Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs Committee to the January meeting and members of the Town Council. Mr. Miller suggested inviting the General Assembly Cheshire delegation or at least notifying them.

Mr. Hostage suggested inviting the Cheshire Public Library Director to attend a future Economic Development Commission meeting to talk about how the Library will be handling e-books in the future. Mr. Sitko suggested inviting either or both of the new businesses to Town, Pro Care or Alliance.

C) Focus Group Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that the draft of the wrap up report for all the Focus Groups will be available at the next meeting for Commissioners to review.

Mr. Miller suggested that the Economic Development Commission take initiative to look at the utility grid and find out how do we work with the utilities to re-structure the grid for future needs? Also to find out what are alternatives are? What are micro-grids?

Mr. Orsini suggested taking a look at how to better identify tree-trimming problems in Cheshire either by the Cheshire Tree Warden, Joseph Michelangelo, or through members of the public. Chairman Pelletier suggested inviting members of the Energy Commission to come to a future Economic Development Commission meeting to discuss suggestions.

Mr. Miller suggested that this Commission monitor the situation for the next month and a half until after the 1st of the year and then re-assess what is going on.

Mr. Orsini suggested that Northeast Utilities' Director of Vegetation, Dave Goodson, could be invited to a future Economic Development Commission meeting to find out how Cheshire could help with the trees that may come into contact with the power lines and therefore improve energy reliability.

D) Work Plan for 2012

Mr. Sitko stated that suggestions for the 2012 Economic Development Commission's Work Plan will be available at the December Commission meeting.

E) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project

Mr. Sitko stated that there is a meeting scheduled for today at 2 p.m. at Rossini's to discuss the culvert replacement that will happen this weekend by the Connecticut Department of Transportation on West Main Street. A detour will be set up from Friday, November 18th at 8 p.m. until Monday, November 21st at 6 a.m. If the project is completed earlier, the roadway will be reopened to the public. In the mean time, a detour will be set up but business access will be available for either side of the culvert. Mr. Sitko stated that many businesses have expressed concern with the effect the street shutdown will have on their business.

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. Mr. Sitko is trying to have the light fixtures installed before winter, but without powering them up yet. Once the culvert work is finished in the Spring, the streetscape can also be finalized.

Commissioners agreed that there will never be a good weekend to shut down part of West Main Street, but agreed it is good to have the culvert replaced before Winter sets in. The "island of refuge" is part of this project, but Mr. Sitko was unsure when it would be installed by the State.

F) Liaison Reports

Mr. Freitag, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce liaison stated that there will be a Government Relations meeting today at 9 a.m. with Vicki Nardello and Mary Fritz to talk about State issues, any one that is available is welcome to attend.

Councilman Schrumm, Town Council Liaison talked about being disappointed that the Sewer Plant referendum questions was defeated, adding that he hopes the plant stays together. He noted that 3 years was spent on the planning and preparing for this project, which will need to be made sometime soon. Councilman Schrumm commented that he hopes the Town will receive some flexibility from the State, if the Water Pollution Control Plant crashes before it is updated. Councilman Schrumm did commend Dennis Dievert, the Plant Superintendent, at doing a great job with the facility.

G) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that the State is holding programs on multi-million dollar economic development, which he will be attending one of them and will report back to the Commission about any discussions / suggestions.

Cheshire is top ranked again this year in Connecticut Magazine.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that CocoaShak recently opened up near the center of Town, next to Michael's Deli.

The Defense Zone resolution has been completed and will be presented to the Town Council at tonight's meeting for their approval.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that Midstate's Medi-Quick Clinic opened last week in the Ricci building on South Main Street. They will provide medical services to people that need assistance above a walk in clinic level but below a hospital. Mr. Sitko commented that it is an impressive facility.

Mr. Sitko stated that Conntec Products of Sandbank Road was looking for a new location and has decided on the former Kinamoor Products location.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that Boemmels Car Wash / Gas Station on West Main Street has been for sale for some time and now there is some interest. Stop and Shop has submitted plans to remove the current building and gas pumps and build a Stop and Shop gasoline station. Plans are before the Planning and Zoning Commission for this project.

H) Other

Councilman Schrumm mentioned adjusting the Zoning Regulations on some key properties, such as in the interchange / nothend of Cheshire, to help develop the area.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Orsini to adjourned the November 15th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:30 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Miller.

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary