

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2012 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Robert Formica, Kathleen Gannon, David Orsini (departed at 8:25 a.m.), Robert Sepp and William Stanley

Commissioner Absent:

Brian Miller

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison (arrived at 8:15 a.m.); Mary and Fred Cramer of Marion Manufacturing and Doug Johnson of Marion Manufacturing (departed at 8:25 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 – January 17, 2012

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the January 17, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Sepp.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Thank you note and e-mail from DECD Commissioner Catherine Smith

Commissioners reviewed the thank you note and e-mail from Commissioner Smith.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Representatives of Marion Manufacturing

Mr. Sitko welcomed Mary Cramer, President / CEO, Fred Cramer, Senior Vice President and Doug Johnson, Vice President of Operations all of Marion Manufacturing.

Mrs. Cramer stated that Marion Manufacturing is located in a 30,000 square foot building on 4 acres of property in Cheshire. Marion Manufacturing is named after Marion Road in Cheshire and was started by Fred Cramer's grandfather and was originally located on Marion Road near Consolidated Industries. Marion Manufacturing creates products for medical, commercial, aerospace and automobiles. They have ISO and TS Automotive certifications. Marion Manufacturing has become a women owned business over the past couple of years, as Fred Cramer needed a break after being with Marion Manufacturing for 50 years.

Mr. Johnson shared some examples of products that Marion Manufacturing creates with Commissioners. Marion Manufacturing uses metal stamping, force light production, progressive and wire form to create their products. Everything they produce is specifically for a company, they do not have a product that they sell on the market. When a company approaches Marion Manufacturing to make a new product, they make a tool to create product after receiving prints for a job and bidding on it.

Mr. Hostage asked how many of Marion Manufacturers competitors are within the United States and how many are overseas? Mr. Johnson replied that with regards to metal stamping, most of the companies are within 30 miles of Cheshire. There are 180 companies in the greater Waterbury area and about 60 of them are metal stamping just like them. Marion Manufacturing does compete heavily with China manufacturers.

Marion Manufacturing currently has 24 employees. When they are looking for new employees, it is not always easy to find quality tool makers, not just for Marion

Manufacturing but for manufacturing in general. They are starting to train new, younger employees in apprentice programs so that Marion Manufacturing is prepared as their employees get older and closer to retirement.

There was discussion about the importance of exposing students at a young age to the idea of manufacturing as a option for a career choice. It is a very good paying field that is in need of more people. Unfortunately, students are pushed from a young age that they have to go to college, but for some children its not the best option and they should know there are other avenues they can follow. Manufacturing is no longer happening in dirty, dark, dangerous facilities.

Chairman Pelletier suggested that Marion Manufacturing get involved with the School / Business Partnership in Cheshire that meets monthly and could be a great source to get the idea of manufacturing into the schools at an early age.

Mr. Sitko asked where do most of Marion Manufacturing employees come from and are there transporation issues? Mr. Johnson replied that there were some kids recently from Kaynor Tech in Waterbury that could have been a good fit for Marion Manufacturing but due to their limited hours and being that they were on the other side of Waterbury, it didn't work out. Instead a young man from Meriden and a young man from Bristol are now working in the shop because they were both about 5 minutes from their location. Some of the current employees come from Waterbury, some of them do car pool to Marion Manufacturing.

Members thanked Mr. & Mrs. Cramer and Mr. Johnson for coming to speak to the Commission this morning.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko suggested inviting Aliant Insurance, a new business to Cheshire from Waterbury, to the March 2012 meeting.

C) Meeting Re: DECD Programs – February 28

Chairman Pelletier stated that the DECD program will be held on Tuesday, February 28th at Elim Park with State Representative Mary Fritz from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m.

D) Focus Group Report

Mr. Sitko stated that he was going to be meeting with the Focus Group Subcommittee one more time on March 1st to develop a work plan for the Commission.

E) Work Plan for 2012 - 2013

The 2012 - 2013 Economic Development Commission's Work Plan will be developed by the Focus Group Subcommittee and then shared with the full Economic Development Commission.

F) Grand List

Chairman Pelletier reviewed the news release regarding the October 1, 2011 Grand List for Cheshire.

G) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project

Chairman Pelletier stated that the culvert project is on hold right now until Spring when the State will be back to complete their work related to the culvert replacement on West Main Street. Once they are done, the streetscape improvements around the culvert will be completed.

H) Pratt & Whitney Property

Mr. Sitko stated that there has been some interest recently in the former Pratt & Whitney property on Knotter Drive from an out of state company. The company is currently working with the Connecticut DECD regarding an incentive package to move to Connecticut.

I) Liaison Reports

Councilman Schrumm, Town Council Liaison stated that they are starting to work on Cheshire's Operating Budget for 2012 – 2013 and are working to keep any tax increases to a bare minimum. State and Federal funding to Cheshire will be decreasing by approximately \$770,000 and the Grand List has gone up by about \$600,000 so we are starting slightly in the hole.

J) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that 10 McKee Place, which was formally occupied by FIP was recently purchased by D Technologies of Cheshire. They are a software development firm that is currently located on West Johnson Avenue.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that the former Stoneworks location at 435 Highland Avenue has been purchased by Drs. Johnny and David Feldman and Dr. Disai with the plans of building 2 medical / office buildings on that property. The application is currently before the Planning & Zoning Commission for approval.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that the former Scooples location is going to be re-developed by Paul Zentek with a burger stand and ice cream stand, which will be a nice use of the property.

Mr. Sitko talked about the recent newspaper article regarding some local retail business closings in Cheshire, including Brix Restaurant, which is currently under contract with another restaurant. There is a copy of a recent article in the packet about the re-opening of the Waverly Restaurant for Commissioners to review.

Mr. Sitko stated that Stop & Shop is looking to take over the Bummels Car Wash / Gas Station location on West Main Street to construct one of their gas stations. The plans have been touched up to add more buffering between the property and the proposed location of the Linear Trail extension along the property.

Cheshire Fitness Zone is starting to work on their new building, where Total Tree and Power Barn were located on South Main Street.

Mr. Sitko reported that Alexion Pharmaceuticals continues to grow, they have acquired 2 companies in the last 60 days.

Mr. Sitko stated that Town Manager Milone has asked him to work with Staff to review the permitting procedures here in Cheshire, over the last couple of months. He is starting with the application process all the way up to through the Certificate of Occupation permit to see if there are ways to touch things up or make improvements.

The Town is continuing with the work to extend the Linear Trail and will be starting the design and survey work for the West Main Street to Jarvis Street stretch. John Dalton, of Dalton Enterprises, is working with the State Department of Transportation regarding the extension of the Linear Trail from Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street.

Business Appreciation Day will be scheduled in May 2013. It was a great program last year and in the near future Mr. Sitko will be looking to form a Subcommittee to begin the planning process again and recruiting a guest speaker.

K) Other

Mr. Schrumm asked about the former Ball & Socket property on West Main Street. Mr. Sitko replied that there is a local group that is working to create an art themed project for the property that is still in the planning stages. The group is also looking into funding options both locally and federally with some possible grant options.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Pelletier to adjourned the February 21st meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:45 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Sepp.

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary