

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2012 AT 7:30 A.M.  
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioner Absent:

Chairman David Pelletier and Robert Formica

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; Dave Hudon, Executive Vice President of Alliant Insurance Services (departed at 8:00 a.m.)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 7:31 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 – February 21, 2012**

**MOTION** by Ms. Gannon that the minutes from the February 21, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Stanley.

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

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 1.

## **VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

A) E-mail of February 21, 2012 from Douglas Johnson of Marion Manufacturing

Commissioners reviewed the thank you e-mail from Marion Manufacturing. Mr. Sitko stated that he talked with Kelly Lenz, who informed him that Mary Cramer will be joining the Small Business Partnership group and will also be coming to Sophomore Career Day at Cheshire High School.

## **VII. BUSINESS**

A) Discussion with Representative of Alliant Insurance Services

Mr. Sitko and Commissioners welcomed Dave Hudon, Executive Vice President of Alliant Insurance Services to the Economic Development Commission meeting. Mr. Hudon explained that Alliant Insurance Services has 55 employees and moved to Cheshire in January 2012 from Waterbury. They are an employee owned company that is located at 55 Realty Drive and Mr. Barker is their landlord. Alliant has a number of office locations across the United States.

Alliant Insurance Services has a history going back to 1925 and is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance administrator. Mr. Hudon stated that many of the employees are from the Waterbury / Cheshire area.

Mr. Miller asked about the types of insurance that Alliant offers? Mr. Hudon stated they offer a wide range of insurance coverages but they do not offer health insurance in the Cheshire office. They do offer flexible spending account, premium collection, marketing and some claim paying for their clients.

When asked how potential changes in health care laws could affect Alliant, Mr. Hudon replied that they are not sure; it is a concern for them that they are watching closely.

Mr. Stanley asked about the types of plans Alliant administers? Mr. Hudon replied it is a lot of employee benefits, such as disability insurance, life insurance. They are also coordinators of home and auto insurance to an individual client base. Alliant also offers a member assistance plan to help with identity theft, accidental death & dismemberment insurance and a concierge service, which is sold individually to groups. COBRA and retiree services makes up around 25% of Alliant's business and employee benefits makes up around 70%.

Mr. Stanley asked how small of a group Alliant works with? Mr. Hudon replied that they can work with “groups” as small as 1 – 2 people, which would get bundled with other smaller associations to form a group trust.

Ms. Gannon asked if Mr. Hudon thought the Cheshire business for Alliant will be growing? Mr. Hudon replied that there may be a little bit of growth in the near future; there is one retiree and a potential termination. He explained that there is a lot of longevity with Alliant’s employees, many of them 15 + years of service. The majority of Alliant’s Cheshire employees are 30 – 50 years old, many of which are young mothers.

Ms. Gannon asked if Alliant were to hire, what type of skills would they be looking for? Mr. Hudon replied initially it would be data entry, clerk positions. The current make up of employees has 4 marketing people, who are the next step up from the clerks and there are 4 different business groups, each with a manager. There are 10 computer programmers / analysts and then a flat upper management scheme. Mr. Hudon stated that Alliant is very proud of its very steady workforce and they don’t expect to change too much but if they do, there is room for expansion in their current location for another 10 – 12 employees.

Mr. Sitko asked where Alliant Insurance Services employees commute from? Mr. Hudon replied mostly the Waterbury / Cheshire area. He noted that when Alliant moved from their Waterbury location, they wanted to find a location that would keep the employees with approximately the same commute distance, which they were able to do for the most part with their new Realty Drive location.

Members thanked Mr. Hudon for coming to speak to the Commission this morning and welcomed Alliant Insurance Services to Cheshire. Mr. Hudon mentioned that the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce had dropped off “welcome” packets for the Alliant Insurance Services employees, which will be distributed at an upcoming employee appreciation event.

#### B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that Chairman Pelletier has arranged for James Redeker, Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner, to come to the April 2012 meeting.

#### C) Meeting Re: DECD Programs – February 28

Mr. Sitko stated that a recap of the DECD program, which was held on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at Elim Park with State Representative Mary Fritz, was sent to Commissioners. He noted that some local businesses are taking advantage of the new DECD programs, such as Healthy Moms. Mr. Sitko stated that Ms. Gannon has suggested sending out a letter to local small businesses to make sure they are aware of the programs and their availability. There has been some talk that the DECD programs may be expanded to businesses with 75 employees in the future.

#### D) Focus Group Report

An extensive report summarizing the Focus Groups was included in this packet for Commissioners to review. The summary was used by the Subcommittee to develop an action work plan for the Commission, for the next few years.

#### E) Work Plan for 2012 - 2013

The Economic Development Commission discussed the 2012 - 2013 Economic Development Commission's Work Plan, which was developed by the Focus Group Subcommittee. It was agreed that some of the items could be worked on soon; others would be taking place over the next year or two. Commissioners talked about how some of the proposals in the work plan would require the work of a Committee and Mr. Sitko stated that he could do some of the small projects. Mr. Miller asked Mr. Sitko to designate the projects in the Work Plan that would be group tasks for the Commission, so the Commissioners could look them over next month.

#### F) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project

Mr. Sitko stated that Clover Construction, the phase 2 contractor, has been on site trying to get as much of their work done as they can at this point. Stop & Shop will now do the granite curbing and walkway near Bummels Car Wash, when they take over the property, probably in the Fall. The culvert replacement on West Main Street is done and now the bridge work needs to be finished. Once they are done, the streetscape improvements around the culvert will be completed.

There will be a few minutes regarding the Linear Trail this week. One meeting is with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and another is with Milone & MacBroom, who was selected to do the design work for the West Main Street to Jarvis Street section of the Trail. The State will be doing the Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street and Jarvis Street north section of the Trail. The Town is responsible for the West Main Street to Jarvis Street section.

A local group is talking about possible development ideas for the former Ball & Socket property on West Main Street, but Mr. Sitko noted that this is still in the early planning stage.

Mr. Stanley commented that the streetscape work that is done looks great and asked if there has been any talk of adding the same curbing, walkway and lighting features else where in Town? Mr. Sitko replied yes, and noted that West Main Street was selected because of the Linear Trail. He added that what is happening on West Main Street is actually very similar to the Town Beautification plan that was created for Cheshire in the 1980's. Ms. Gannon commented that once the West Main Street project is complete, it would be great if the Town could look for the next location to do these same types of upgrades.

#### G) 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. The same company is also considering a building in North Haven; Mr. Sitko hopes to know more in the next 45 days.

#### H) Election of Officers

Vice Chairman Miller suggested that the election of officers for the Economic Development Commission be tabled until next month.

#### I) Liaison Reports

There were no Liaisons present at this meeting. Mr. Sitko noted how pleased Alliant Insurance Services was with the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce reaching out to them during their recent move into Cheshire.

#### J) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that New York Graphic Society is closing their Waterbury location and moving to Cheshire Industrial Park, in a section of the H.D. Segur building. They will occupy 3200 square feet but may ultimately have 90,000 square feet in the building. New York Graphic Society manufactures and sells prints for a variety of markets.

Mr. Sitko talked about the former Brix Restaurant property, which was sold and will be another restaurant. It is expected to open in April 2012.

Mr. Sitko stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission has approved the former Stonework's location at 435 Highland Avenue for plans to build two 14,000 square foot medical / office buildings on that property. The property owners were also just approved by the Town Council for a tax incentive for this project.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that the former Zentek Farm stand / Scooples location on West Main Street has been approved by the Planning and Zoning Department for re-developed by Paul Zentek for a burger stand and ice cream stand with an enclosed screened in porch for the back of the property. This will be a seasonal business and Mr. Sitko thought it might be open in a few months.

Mr. Sitko stated that Planning and Zoning approval was also given to Stop & Shop's plans to take over the Bummels Car Wash / Gas Station location on West Main Street to construct one of their gas stations.

Mr. Sitko reported that Alexion Pharmaceuticals continues to report good news for the company and noted that a recent news article about a new drug they are developing was in this meeting's packet.

K) Other

None.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stanley to adjourn the March 20th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:30 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Ms. Gannon.

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski  
Recording Secretary