

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 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, Brian Miller and William Stanley

Commissioner Absent:

David Orsini and Robert Sepp

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; William Freitag, Liaison from the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison; Paul Oei Chief Operating Officer, and Sean Taylor, Director of Operations, of New York Graphic Society (departed at 8:10 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 – May 15, 2012

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the May 15, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Ms. Gannon.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Economic Development Commission this month.

VII. RECOGNITION OF KATHLEEN GANNON

It was announced that this would be Ms. Gannon's last Economic Development Commission meeting after 20 years with the Commission as she and her family will be moving to Rhode Island. Commissioners thanked her for her time and dedication to the Commission, adding that she would be greatly missed and wished much success. Ms. Gannon stated that she will really miss the work on the Commission and the knowledge and friendships she has gained.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with New York Graphic Society Publishing Group

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Paul Oei, Chief Operating Officer, and Sean Taylor, Director of Operations, of New York Graphic Society Publishing Group to the Economic Development Commission meeting.

Mr. Oei stated that New York Graphic Society has been in the art and publishing business for 75 years. There are 6 divisions of the company. New York Graphic Society is in the business of fine art reproductions; their number one piece of artwork in sales is The Last Supper by Da Vinci. There are a lot of different types of media that they sell such as paper, canvas, wood, decals, metal and acrylic.

The annual revenue of New York Graphic Society is approximately \$25 million and they employ approximately 100 employees in the Connecticut area. The corporate headquarters of New York Graphic Society is in Norwalk and they hope to make Cheshire their manufacturing center. There are two distribution centers, one in Waterbury and one in California as well as their China operations.

Mr. Oei talked about how New York Graphic Society has, with the help of the Connecticut government, made an investment of \$1.5 million in automation equipment in their new Cheshire facility on Knotter Drive.

New York Graphic Society customers are found all over the world and include Marshalls, Hobby Lobby, TJ Max, Michaels, AC Moore and Wal-Mart. They also have an e-commerce site through www.art.com and have their own independent e-commerce site at www.ingallery.com to sell direct.

Mr. Taylor invited the members of the Commission to come for a tour of the New York Graphic Society facility in Cheshire, once everything is up and running. The projected move in date is July 9th. There will be 50 – 60 employees in Cheshire, once it is up and fully running.

When asked how they do their marketing, Mr. Oei stated that they have a strong sales force that is amazing. They will be talking to J.C. Penney in the coming weeks, which is very exciting. New York Graphic Society is also looking to expand their sales in Europe and China.

Members thanked Mr. Oei and Mr. Taylor for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko and Commissioners talked about options for companies to invite to a future Economic Development Commission meeting. Ed O'Connor from Quinnipiac University's Medical School has offered to come to speak to the Commission and it was suggested he be invited to the September meeting.

C) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project

Mr. Sitko stated that island of refuge on West Main Street is being finished up and should be completed any day now. Once the State work is done, Clover Construction will complete the streetscape improvements around the culvert.

D) Pratt & Whitney Property

Mr. Sitko stated that he believes there have been 2 offers on the former Pratt & Whitney property on Knotter Drive; Mr. Sitko hopes to know more in the next week or two.

E) Shop Local Committee

The Shop Local Committee has met twice, with the Chamber of Commerce is taking the lead with this initiative but the Economic Development Commission continues to support this project. The Committee has talked about the use of social media to promote the local businesses and possible professional development options for retailers and restaurant operators.

F) Liaison Reports

Mr. Freitag reported on recent activities of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

Councilman Schrumm talked about the Waste Water Treatment Plant expansion that is needed and the impact the State prison has on the system.

G) Summer Meeting Schedule

Chairman Pelletier suggested that if there is nothing pressing perhaps the July 2012 meeting could be skipped as well as the August 2012 meeting, due to anticipated lack of quorum.

H) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko talked about Bozzuto's possible addition to their newer building. The addition would allow for Bozzuto's to leave their North Haven facility and would be a positive thing for Cheshire's tax base. A time line for this project is not known at this stage.

Mr. Sitko reported that W/S Development was given a 1-year extension on their Planning and Zoning approvals.

Mr. Sitko met with Mr. Flood of Bovano's about the future of his property on South Main Street.

Mr. Sitko reported that Alexion continues to do well. The Ball & Socket property and potential arts development is still being discussed and looked into by interested parties. There is also some potential interest in the former Cheshire Cinema / Huxley Motor property.

CL & P's Connecticut Economic Review report is available from Mr. Sitko for any Commissioners that would like a copy.

There was a very preliminary meeting about the Linear Trail expansion past Dalton Enterprises, which the State has said they are still over a year away from a public information session, but it is being worked on.

There is a grant opportunity for town centers for potentially up to \$500,000 from the State Bond Commission, the deadline is September 28th.

I) Other

Councilman Schrumm suggested talking to the owners of Maplecroft Plaza about potential re-vamping the shopping center to make it more welcoming and "walkable". Ms. Gannon agreed that it could be done better at that plaza to make it more walking friendly to draw more people to the plaza and its businesses.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Miller to adjourned the June 19th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:45 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Stanley.

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary