

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2013 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, David Orsini, Robert Sepp, Steve Sidoruk and William Stanley (arrived at 7:40 a.m.)

Commissioner Absent:

Robert Formica and Brian Miller

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; Robert DeJongh, Liaison from the Inland / Wetlands Commission; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison (arrived at 7:35 a.m.); Karen Brown, Marketing Manager of Trailblazer (departed at 8:12 a.m.); Shelly, Manager of Cheshire Denali store (arrived at 7:40 a.m. and departed at 8:12 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 – December 18, 2012

MOTION by Mr. Sepp that the minutes from the December 18, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Stanley.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

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

VII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Trailblazer

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Karen Brown, Marketing Manager of Trailblazer, to the Economic Development Commission meeting to talk about the new Denali store in Cheshire and Trailblazer stores in Connecticut.

Trailblazer recently opened a 7,008 square foot Denali store in the former Rite Aid location in Maplecroft Plaza. Trailblazer currently has 7 stores, 6 in Connecticut and 1 in Rhode Island. Ms. Brown introduced Shelly, the manger of the new Cheshire Denali store to the Commissioners.

Ms. Brown stated that Trailblazer is an almost 20 year old specialty outdoor retailer carrying brands such as The North Face, Patagonia, etc. with superior customer service. Trailblazer started in New Haven as “The Running Start” and now has 7 stores and 2 e-commerce web sites.

Ms. Brown talked about Trailblazer’s mission to give back to the communities they are located in and to have a strong community involvement. Recently, Denali was a sponsor of Cheshire Lights of Hope and Cheshire’s Half Marathon. Ms. Brown noted that Denali had some big discounts available for their opening in Cheshire but it is difficult to meet their community involvement goals with heavy product discounts.

Mr. DeJongh commented that people of Cheshire are not necessarily “loyal” to shop in Town. He talked about the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce gift certificates that many local businesses are involved in and has been popular.

Chairman Pelletier commented that he felt with the traffic light at the back of the plaza, at the Maple Avenue / Main Street / West Main Street intersection, it seems to draw more traffic into the plaza. It was also noted that Marshall’s and Stop & Shop are big draws to the plaza.

Ms. Brown stated that she would like to start connecting with local groups and other local businesses to draw people into the store. Denali could hold events in the store such as clinics, demonstrations or discount shopping events for local organizations as a fundraiser. She also noted that the retailer has a pending application with the

Cheshire Chamber of Commerce. Mr. DeJongh noted that the Chamber is great for local networking.

Mr. Orsini asked with regards to Internet sales, are the same products and pricing available in the stores and online? Ms. Brown replied that it is the same product and inventory that is found in the stores, at the same price. She noted that online purchases are mainly for convenience. She stated that there are people that come into the stores to do price comparisons with various mobile apps as well as come into to look at color options and to check sizing before ordering online.

Currently in Cheshire there are 10 employees, 4 of which are full time.

When asked if Trailblazer buys marketing lists for mailings, Ms. Brown replied that they do not usually buy those types of lists. They do collect customer contact information, including email addresses, when a purchase is made. She noted that Trailblazer has not done a lot of mailings over the past 5 to 8 years but there was a great response to the mailing that was done for Cheshire's Denali store opening. As a result, they did do some mailings around other stores.

Ms. Brown asked Commissioners if they had any suggestions to bring people to Denali. Mr. Orsini suggested connecting with the Cheshire Parks and Recreation Department or Cheshire YMCA. Mr. DeJongh suggested working with the Chamber of Commerce for a possible Business After Hours event, the Spring Home and Business Expo and the Fall Festival. Ms. Brown thanked the Commission for their suggestions adding that she would love to hear from them at any time with any suggestions they have for the Denali store.

Members thanked Ms. Brown for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Commissioners suggested inviting representative(s) from the Dodd Middle School Robotics Club or Cheshire High School Robotics Club to a future Economic Development Commission meeting. Mr. Sitko suggested inviting the new Director of Public Works, George Noewatne and/or new Town Engineer, Walter Gancarz to a future meeting.

C) Small Business Express Program

Mr. Sitko stated that Governor Malloy held a press conference last week regarding the Connecticut Small Business Express Program. He noted that there were 9 businesses from Cheshire that took part in this program and a copy of the report from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development was included in this meeting's packet.

D) Plan of Conservation & Development

Mr. Sitko reported that he and Mr. Miller met and came up with 4 items for the Economic Development Commission to consider for the Cheshire Plan of Conservation & Development. Those items are 1) Review the permitted uses in the West Main Street commercial area. 2) Review the uses and signage associated with the R-20A zones. 3) Consider flexible treatment of underutilized or underperforming properties. 4) Consider more retail opportunities in the north end, but with limitation.

If anyone has any other suggestions, they should forward them to Mr. Sitko.

E) Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program

Mr. Sitko reported that the Town Attorney has completed his review of the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program, adding that it is likely that this program will be added to a future Town Council agenda. Commissioners agreed that they would like to know if the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program will be on a Town Council agenda so that they could be at the meeting to show their support.

F) Liaison Reports

Mr. DeJongh stated that there was nothing to report on the Inland Wetland Commission.

Mr. Schrumm, Town Council Liaison stated that the Town Council is working on the Town Operating Budget for 2013 – 2014. In the mean time, they are waiting to see what the State does with their budget. Mr. Schrumm stated that it is going to be another tough budget year for everyone. He also noted that the Cheshire Grand List will be coming out soon but is expected to show only a little growth.

G) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that Consolidated Industries has recently spent a lot of money for clean up and noise reduction. They may be purchasing more equipment with talks of a possible 15,000 square foot expansion; they are located in an I-2 zone on Mixville Road.

Housing Authority Insurance Group, located on Commerce Court, has 158 employees and is looking into a 40,000 square foot building expansion option for their current location at the end of the cul-de-sac. They hope to add 18 more employees this year.

Mr. Sitko noted that a copy of the recent notice of the Harold Webster Smith Award Celebration for Marion Manufacturing was including in this meeting's packet. Also, a

copy of a recent article regarding Richard Chevrolet's recently completed expansion renovation project was in this packet for Commissioners to review. Also included in the packet is CCM's Legislative Program for Commissioners to review.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commissioners that CK Greenhouses recently acquired Kurt Weiss Greenhouses on East Johnson Avenue. He also informed the Commissioners that WS Development would probably be in to Town Hall in the next month or two to discuss the status of their project in the Interchange Zone.

Mr. Sitko stated that he continues to work on plans for Business Appreciation Day and is working to secure a speaker for the event. Once the speaker is secured the date will be finalized. He also informed the Commission that George Noewatne was promoted to Director of Public Works and Walter Gancarz has been hired as the Town Engineer.

Mr. Sitko reminded Commissioners that the Election of Officers should be held in April and asked that the Commissioners start thinking about the election options.

H) Other

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary