

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2013 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Robert Formica, David Orsini, Robert Sepp and Steve Sidoruk

Commissioner Absent:

Brian Miller and William Stanley

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; Woody Dawson, Planning & Zoning Commission Liaison; Jeff Goodin, Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team Academic Advisor; Larry Levine, Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team; mentor from Sikorsky Aircraft; 4 students from the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:32 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 15, 2013

MOTION by Mr. Sepp that the minutes from the January 15, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Orsini.

VOTE: In Favor – Formica, Pelletier, Orsini, Sepp, and Sidoruk
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 Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team to the Economic Development Commission meeting. Mr. Goodin, the Academic Advisor to the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team told the Commission that the Robotics Team has been around for 12 years and is finally starting to link the Middle School Robotics program with the High School Robotics program.

At Cheshire High School the Robotics program is year round but the build season is only approximately 6 weeks long. One of the Team Co-Captains spoke about what happens during the Robotics build season, which ends with a competition. During the six weeks you have to build the entire robot from scratch, testing it and preparing for competition. The Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team will be competing in New York City in two weeks with teams from all over the United States and abroad. The competition theme this year is "Ultimate Ascent". There will also be a competition held in Hartford in March; both competitions are Regional competitions for the Team.

Members of the team explained their roles in the project. Nick, for instance, a Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team member, came forward to talk to the Commission about his work in marketing the Team which includes creating a business plan for the Team and to show appreciation for the Team's mentors, creating brochures, seeking donations from outside businesses to help fund the approximate \$40,000 annual budget for the Team. The annual budget covers travel expenses, costs of parts, etc. The most that can be spent on parts for the robot is \$4,000 annually. There has also been work done to create a web site for the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team that includes sponsor information and team member information.

When asked how the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team has done in the past, the Commission was told that they have not won yet but have been fairly competitive. In their rookie year, they won the Rookie of the Year.

Mr. Levine came forward and explained why and how Sikorsky Aircraft has mentored robotics teams like the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team. He stated that

there are 20 students on the team this year, which is a big increase from last year. There is a new robotics curriculum this year at Cheshire High School. Mr. Levine also talked about the Robotics Team at Dodd Middle School and their Lego league.

Chairman Pelletier talked about the Connecticut Education Foundation and suggested that the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team look to that foundation for grants or other funding that could help their team in the future.

Members thanked the Cheshire High School FIRST Robotics Team for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning and wished them good luck in their upcoming competitions.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko suggested inviting the new Director of Public Works, George Noewatne to a future meeting. It was also mentioned that in the past, an Economist has come to speak to the Economic Development Commission early on in the year to talk about the local, national and global economy.

C) Plan of Conservation & Development

Commissioners reviewed the draft letter to the Planning & Zoning Commission with the 4 items the Economic Development Commission would like considered 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.

D) Property Assessed Clean Energy (C - PACE) Program

Mr. Sitko reported that the Town Council has referred the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program to their Planning Committee. When a meeting is scheduled to discuss this program, Mr. Sitko will notify Commissioners.

E) Credit Ratings

Mr. Sitko reported that he, the Town Manager and the Finance Director made presentation to Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings earlier this month on behalf of the Town of Cheshire. As a result, the organizations have reaffirmed the Town's favorable credit ratings, which is important in obtaining low interest rates on bonds.

F) Grand List

Cheshire's Grand List as of October 1, 2012 was released on January 30, 2013 and showed only a minimal overall increase of 0.64% over the previous year's Grand List. As a result, at the current mill rate of 27.23 and the current collection rate of 99.0%, the additional revenue generated will be \$494,203.

G) Conflict of Interest

Commissioners were asked to review Cheshire's Conflict of Interest Ordinance and to disclose in writing any potential conflicts to the Town Council.

H) Liaison Reports

Mr. DeJongh stated that the Inland Wetland Commission is starting to see activity pick up, which is good news.

I) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that members of the Town staff met with representatives from W/S Development recently and the group is planning to move forward on their proposed Lifestyle Center plans in the Interchange Zone. A concept plan was presented and the next step would be the approval of a site plan by the Planning & Zoning Commission. W/S Development has said they will be back to Cheshire in the next 60 to 90 days with an application and plans. At this point, W/S Development will be focusing on the retail section of the project; the residential aspect will be done at another time. Mr. Sitko was not sure of the status of the proposed hotel for the project but believed the movie theatre would not be part of the initial phase.

Mr. Sitko reported that Grand Apizza has closed and Pink Petunia will be closing soon. Villarina's will be closing soon. Sweet Pea has opened in the location of the former Owen's Deli on South Main Street. The former Shangra Lee location will be the home of Food Works, which is a natural, organic, gluten free food store.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that Bozzuto's is looking at possibly expanding on their existing property. Bovano's property is for lease, it is 2 acres of land on South Main Street.

New York Graphic Society is in talks with the Prison about maybe having them do the work that they currently out source to China.

The Town Beautification Committee Awards were given out earlier this month; a listing of the recipients is included in this meeting's packet.

Housing Authority Insurance Group, located on Commerce Court, has 158 employees and is working on plans for a 40,000 square foot building expansion for their current location at the end of the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Sitko continues to work a business to establish a permanent location on Fieldstone Court.

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.

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.

J) Other

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Orsini to adjourned the February 19th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:45 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Pelletier.

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary