

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2013 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Robert Formica, Robert Sepp, Steve Sidoruk and William Stanley

Commissioner Absent:

David Orsini

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; Robert DeJongh, Liaison from the Inland / Wetlands Commission; Lisa Rivers, Transit Manager at Connecticut Department of Transportation (departed at 8:20 a.m.); Sam Gold, Acting Executive Director of Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pelletier 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 – Special Meeting June 25, 2013

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the June 25, 2013 Special Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Sidoruk.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Economic Development Commission.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Lisa Rivers of CT Fastrack

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Lisa Rivers, Transit Manager at the Connecticut Department of Transportation / CT Fastrack.

Ms. Rivers explained that CT Fastrack is the brand name for bus rapid transit in Connecticut, which has been created to help speed up and improve the flow of traffic. CT Fastrack will have fast and frequent service from Waterbury to Hartford and will later be expanded up to East Hartford and Manchester. It is the hope of CT Fastrack that this expanded service will improve access to jobs and culture and shopping in Connecticut. The new bus way is using an old industrial corridor between New Britain and Hartford.

Ms. Rivers noted that in the late 1990's the Connecticut Transportation Department looked at commuter rail, light rail and roadway improvements to develop better transportation options in Connecticut. This bus way was selected as the best option for Connecticut along with the expansion of railway service between New Haven and Springfield, MA, which should be completed in 2016.

Mr. Rivers explained the proposed bus lines with would offer express and local bus routes between New Britain and Hartford. There will also be service coming into New Britain from Bristol, UConn Farmington, Waterbury, Cheshire, Southington, Central Connecticut State University and Westfarms Mall. In Hartford, all bus lines will travel the downtown loop after stopping at Union Station.

Ms. Rivers noted that the CT Fastrack Guideway construction was on schedule. She also talked about the new CT Fastrack website that was recently rolled out, noting that there are 2 more phases planned for the development of the website, www.ctfastrack.com. There are also plans for the development of applications that commuters will be able to use to view routes, wait times and purchase bus tickets.

Commissioners noted that with the planned bus stop on Route 10 at the Commuter Parking lot, it may be a good idea to work with W/S Development as they plan their development. Ms. Rivers suggested that a bus stop could be placed on the outside edge of the project with sidewalks in the development that would lead to the designated bus stop area.

Mr. Formica asked what the cost is for this project and questioned if and when the fares and use of the bus system will pay for its self? Ms. Rivers replied that the total project is expected to cost \$567 million (building, engineer work, new buses, etc.). There is expected to be a \$10 million annual subsidy going forward once the project is completed. When asked, it was determined that right now it costs \$3.75 each way to travel by bus from Cheshire to Hartford. It was also noted that there is a proposal right now for a 15% rate increase to the CT bus way fares.

Ms. Rivers noted that a study of passenger counts will be done 6 months before the project is complete and then again 2 years after the project is complete, as part of the funding program for this project.

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

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Chairman Pelletier has suggested inviting Cheshire resident Dan Esty, who is the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to an Economic Development Commission meeting in the next couple of months.

C) Money Magazine

Mr. Sitko reported that the Town of Cheshire was ranked 39 on the list of "Best Places to Live" in America. A copy of the top 50 locations was included in this meeting's packet.

D) West Main Streetscape Improvements Project

Mr. Sitko reported that the West Main Street Streetscape project was practically complete with the last remaining item being the installation of a bench in the area, which has already been ordered. He noted that Cheshire had received \$1 million from the State of Connecticut in grants for this project. With the installation of the bench, this project should be completed \$395 under budget.

E) Liaison Reports

Mr. DeJongh stated that the Inland Wetland Commission is reviewing 3 bridge projects in Cheshire: Blacks Road, East Johnson Avenue and Creamery Road. He also noted that applications to the Inland Wetland Commission have increased a little bit recently.

F) Recognition of Commissioner Robert Sepp

Chairman Pelletier noted that this would be Mr. Sepp's last meeting with the Commission because he has to resign since he recently moved out of Cheshire. Commissioners thanked Mr. Sepp for this service to the Town of Cheshire as a member of the Economic Development Commission adding that he will be missed.

G) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that Marbridge Retirement Center is looking to demolish and expand on their current property and adjacent property. They have been in to talk to the Historic District Commission for design suggestions, even though they are not in a Historic District. As a result, they have submitted plans yesterday to Planning & Zoning for a 28,000 square foot facility on West Main Street.

Bozzuto's Planning & Zoning zone text change relating to height restrictions was recently approved, which will allow a building maximum height of 100 feet from the previous 65 feet. Dalton Enterprises has withdrawn its Planning & Zoning application for a 2nd driveway. W/S Development is waiting on final site development plan approval so that they can break ground in the Spring for their development in the Interchange Zone.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that Andrews Consulting company has recently been purchased; Foodworks is expecting to have an October 2013 opening in Cheshire Shopping Center; Bovano's property on South Main Street is up for sale and there has been some interest in the property.

EDAC Corporation should be in their final stage of moving in and should be fully operational this Fall; this is the company that is moving into the former Pratt & Whitney building on Knotter Drive.

Housing Authority Insurance Group, located on Commerce Court, is currently before the Planning & Zoning Commission looking for approval for a 46,000 square foot building expansion for their current location at the end of the cul-de-sac.

Consolidated Industries is planning for an approximately 20,000 square foot building, which will be along Waterbury Road near their existing property. They would like to add 4 new drop hammers. They would install the new drop hammers, get them up and running and then de-commission the existing drop hammers. Mr. Sitko noted

that the Town Regulations do not allow for drop hammers in Cheshire and Consolidated Industries existing drop hammers are considered existing non-conforming use; the Planning Department has asked Consolidated Industries for a narrative of the new drop hammers they are proposing for this project and a time line as to when the existing drop hammers will be phased out. Consolidated Industries has asked for more time and their application has been pushed back to October at the Planning & Zoning Commission.

H) Other

Sam Gold, Acting Executive Director of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments was present at this meeting and addressed the Commission. Mr. Gold stated that the Council of Governments is looking at consolidating some of the regions in Connecticut. The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments has just received approval to create a Regional Economic Strategic Plan and a Feasibility Study is being done for a "Bike Share" program at local bus stops in Cheshire. He also talked about a video traffic study that is being worked on in the Waterbury / Cheshire area of interstate 84.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Sepp to adjourned the September 17th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:44 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Sidoruk.

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

The motion passed 5 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary