

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 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, Steve Sidoruk, William Stanley and Ray Voelker

Commissioner Absent:

none

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, Former Economic Development Commissioner; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison; Paul August, General Manager of Food Works

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 – Regular Meeting September 17, 2013

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the September 17, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Sidoruk.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VI. Welcome Commissioner Ray Voelker

Commissioners welcomed Ray Voelker as a new Commissioner with the Economic Development Commission.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Revised Roster of Commissioners

Commissioners reviewed the roster listing for the Commission.

B) Email Concerning Panic Button Locations

Commissioners reviewed the email concerning panic button locations in various Town Hall meeting rooms.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Food Works

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Paul August, General Manager of Food Works. Food Works is a natural food market that will be opening in the Cheshire Shopping Center on South Main Street, in the former Shangri-Li location.

Mr. August explained that this will be the 4th Food Works store, the original opened up about 20 years ago in Guilford. The store is a healthy food store that offers organic produce, wheat and gluten free items and natural food products. Old Saybrook is their 2nd store followed by their location in Monroe.

The owners have been looking at Cheshire for a long time and the demographics have seemed like a good fit for Food Works and decided almost a year ago to go ahead and create this new Food Works location. Mr. August anticipates opening in 2 to 3 weeks.

Food Works is a full service grocery store that tries to work with local organic farms. There will also be a juice and smoothie bar in the Cheshire location. Food Works approach is that they want to get involved with the people in Town. They are very “pro-human” to add the personal touch to their business, to help people out including local soup kitchens and shelters.

When asked about delays in opening the store, Mr. August stated that he didn’t realize he would need an architect for the opening of this store, which he hadn’t needed in other locations

when they opened a store. He suggested that maybe Cheshire could have a small booklet for small businesses that are looking to set up in Cheshire with a listing of requirements and contacts. Mr. Sitko stated that the Town Manager held a meeting about 2 weeks ago to look at the building permit process for new homes in the hopes of streamlining the process.

Mr. August stated that he understands the needs for all the requirements but he did hit some stumbling blocks. He also talked about the interior demolition and construction delays that were uncovered as they went through the build process.

Chairman Pelletier commented that Mr. August's feedback is important to this group and they appreciate it. If there is something that can help the next person coming into Town, the Economic Development Commission would like to do that. Mr. August commented that initially he was frustrated but once everything got rolling things have been going smoothly and he believes this will continue as the project wraps up. He is not trying to hide anything and invites all the inspection officials to come in as they finish up the project.

Food Works has hired 6 people so far for Cheshire and Mr. August expects to have approximately 10 – 12 people initially with some after school kids and other part time employees. Cheshire is equivalent to the size of the Guilford location, except there is no basement in Cheshire.

Hours of operation will be 9 am to 6 pm or 7 pm, seven days a week in Cheshire. Mr. August is hopeful that the juice bar will be a draw for people leaving the YMCA gym.

Mr. Sitko noted that the people that he knows that have been to a Food Works location speak highly of the stores and he added that he has received a number of calls looking to see when the Cheshire location will open so he expects to see a lot of customers at the store when it opens. Mr. August noted that there have also been people stopping by the store already and he has let people come in and walk through to take a look.

Mr. August talked about some of the programs that Food Works offers for senior citizens discounts every day offering a 15% discount, store cards with significant discounts for its customers, etc.

Mr. Hostage suggested that Food Works set an open date and know that no plan is 100% and there will always be something to do, he speaks from experience.

Mr. August noted that he was not sure that the Juice Bar will be ready when the store is ready to open and wonders if the store could open before the juice bar is ready, because it is a separate organization.

When asked if the architect that was hired made any significant changes to the plans that Mr. August drew up and he explained that the configuration of the restrooms needed to be changed but otherwise no there were no significant changes. Mr. August did have to change the architect's plan a couple times to adjust for the store layout and restroom locations.

Members thanked Mr. August for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning. Mr. August stated that he hopes to set a firm date, maybe even by the end of the day today.

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 the November Economic Development Commission meeting.

C) Certified Local Government (CLG)

Mr. Sitko reported that the Town Council has approved the Historic District Commission's application for Cheshire to become a Certified Local Government. There are currently 46 towns in Connecticut with this designation. The Town will receive a \$ 2800 annual grant and is eligible to apply for additional grants by having this designation. There really is no downside to this designation.

D) Doing Business with the Town

Chairman Pelletier mentioned that there have been discussions about doing business with the Town in the past and suggested working with the Chamber of Commerce maybe at one of their lunch meeting to make this a focus topic. Mr. Sitko stated that he has received information from other towns regarding their bidding process that can be reviewed as part of this discussion. Mr. Sitko stated that he would talk to Sheldon Dill and Michael Milone to come up with something.

E) Incentive Policy

Chairman Pelletier asked Mr. Sidoruk and Mr. Stanley to join he and Mr. Hostage to work on reviewing the Town's Incentive Policy and then come back to the Commission with any suggestions. Mr. Sitko noted that he has started to gather information already for this group.

F) Liaison Reports

Mr. Schrumm, Town Council Liaison, reported that the ground breaking for the Waste Water Treatment Plants \$32 million upgrade will be held tomorrow after many, many years of planning. The Capital Budget was finalized in August.

G) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that Feldman Orthodontics has moved into their new location on Highland Avenue and referenced a recent news article about the group that was included in this meeting's packet.

Housing Authority Insurance Group, located on Commerce Court, has been approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission for a 46,000 square foot building expansion for their current location at the end of the cul-de-sac. They have also applied for incentive assistance.

Mr. Sitko is looking into applying for another STEAP grant for Cheshire, to extend sidewalks up West Main Street. The deadline will be in April 2014 to apply.

Consolidated Industries has withdrawn their expansion plans for a 20,000 square foot building with 4 new hammers. They had a lot of opposition from the neighbors and it was discovered that you can not expand a non-conforming use, which is the hammer shop operation according to the Planning & Zoning Regulations. Consolidated Industries has represented over a period of years they have gone from 12 hammers to 6, so they have been reducing them. The Town asked for a narrative from Consolidated Industries and they are working on that. The Town has also learned that you can't move a non-conforming use to another location on the property. So Consolidated Industries is stepping back and re-assessing their plans with the help of an attorney. Mr. Sitko is hopeful that a resolution can be worked out that will benefit the business and the neighbors. He noted that the neighbors are concerned that the old hammers will not be decommissioned, after the new hammers are put in. The Town has also asked for a schedule of decommissioning the hammers. The addition was planned closer to Route 70, which would hold the new hammers, and be further away from the neighbors.

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 to Planning & Zoning for a 28,000 square foot facility on West Main Street. This proposed project will be done in phases so that the residents will not be displaced off their property.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that Dragonfly Consignment recently opened across from the Town Hall on Elm Street. The store will be strictly child consignment items.

W/S Development is expected to submit its site development plans within the next 2 or 3 weeks, otherwise they have been relatively quiet.

EDAC Corporation has moved into the former Pratt & Whitney building on Knotter Drive.

Bovano's retail store is still up and running and will continue to sell their products on site at their South Main Street location. The owner, Mr. Flood, will continue to try to sell the property.

An article submitted by Councilman Schrumm regarding "Suburbia" was included in this meeting's packet for Commissioners for review.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commissioners that the Dunkin Donuts application for a new location at the corner of Route 68 and Route 70, near the Notch Store has been tabled. He noted that there has been a lot of opposition from the neighbors for the drive thru with a concern for safety and traffic in the area.

When asked, Mr. Sitko stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission recently approved the infill text change on Route 10 near Elmwood Circle. Councilman Schrumm stated that this

could be of interest to the Economic Development Commission with regards to commercial development in that area of Cheshire. Mr. Sitko stated that it is a R-20A zone which would allow for a mix of office and residential.

Councilman Schrumm mentioned that just north of Jarvis Street, archaeologist found some remains, which may slow down the development of the Linear Trail expansion and proposed parking area in that location. The State and Town continue to work with the neighbors in that area that will be affected by the Linear Trail expansion. With regards to the Dalton area Linear Trail expansion, Mr. Sitko stated that the State continues to work with Mr. Dalton to come to an agreement.

H) Other

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Orsini to adjourned the October 15th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:32 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Sidoruk.

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

The motion passed 6 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary