

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

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Robert DeJongh, David Orsini, Steve Sidoruk, William Stanley and Ray Voelker (departed at 8:30 a.m.)

Commissioner Absent:

Robert Formica and Ray Voelker

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; Michael Milone, Town Manager (departed at 8:30 a.m.); Frank Biancur, District Maintenance Foreman for the Education Department (departed at 8:30 a.m.); Walter Gancarz, Operations Manager/Town Engineer (departed at 8:30 a.m.)

Others Present:

Commissioner Daniel Esty of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (departed at 8:30 a.m.); Sheldon Dill, Executive Director of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Rich Ogurick, Chairman of the Energy Commission (departed at 8:30 a.m.); David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison; Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; Charles Dimmick, John Barry, Gary Post

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 – Regular Meeting November 19, 2013

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the November 19, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Sidoruk.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

VI. APPROVAL OF 2014 MEETING DATES

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the Economic Development Commission approves the 2014 regular meeting date schedule as presented. **SECONDED** by Mr. Sidoruk.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with DEEP Commissioner, Dan Esty

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Dan Esty, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to today's Economic Development Commission meeting.

Commissioner Esty stated that Governor Malloy appointed him to his position of Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in March 2011. In 2008 he was an advisor to President Obama during this first election campaign. He explained that since starting in his position as Commissioner Mr. Esty has re-done 26 permitting programs resulting in a 20% cut in their operating budget and staff has been decreased by 19%. Commissioner Esty is using the "Lean Process" and reviewing procedures of his department step by step. As a result he has been able to speed up the permitting processes his department is responsible for by 75% resulting in 90% of permit applications being processed within 60 days now.

With regards to energy, Connecticut has some of the highest electricity rates in the country as a result a comprehensive energy strategy is being developed for Connecticut. This strategy will help to increase energy efficiency for all sectors of the State. It also has allowed for a standardized Energy Efficiency Service Contract model for municipalities to follow. There is also a renewable power push that allows the State to have providers compete for the lowest rates using a reverse auction. Commissioner Esty also talked about the creation of "Green Banks" that help with financing for energy efficiency improvement projects for residents and

commercial business. Commissioner Esty stated that Connecticut residents will see a bump up in their energy rates over the next few months due to a lack of infrastructure improvements over the years. He also noted that 6 New England Governors met recently to commit to working together to make these long overdue improvements.

Commissioner Esty stated that Electric Vehicle Charging Stations are being built all over Connecticut. Natural Gas is being looked at for a vehicle fuel option. Reliability is also a major issue for Connecticut so the concept of "structure of reliability" and creating micro grids, of which 9 micro grids are being built now.

Commissioner Esty noted that Connecticut State Parks are currently in their 100th Anniversary year. The State Parks Department is working on developing a new business model now with more seasonable employees and contract workers.

Charles Dimmick asked if there were any long range programs for utilities to be moved to underground? Commissioner Esty replied that the cost to move the utilities underground is very high and there is no broad project to have this done. He noted that micro grids are a more sensible option. Commissioner Esty noted that in Hurricane Sandy last year underground utilities were impaired due to the storm surges.

Town Manager Milone commented that when Cheshire initially was looking at micro grids, crossing a road way was not allowed. Commissioner Esty stated that now it is acceptable for micro grid properties to be across the road from each other. They also talked about the expansion of natural gas being a priority. Commissioner Esty noted that 900 miles of new mains and transmission lines are in the planning process in New England.

Gary Post questioned Commissioner Esty about the work being done through the Brownfields program to improve contaminated properties. Commissioner Esty noted that a lot of work has been done to protect the innocent purchaser of contaminated property. He noted that the clean up expense is so high the State has to find a way to support the clean up so it is financially feasible to re-develop the land but with possible land use restrictions based upon the level of contamination. He added that the fear of the environmental hazard drives up the cost of the clean up.

Mr. Hostage complemented Commissioner Esty on the time he has spent on looking at ways to produce power effectively and suggested that controlling consumption should be next. Commissioner Esty replied that you can recognize this in a way through better efficiency but noted that you can't convince most people that they need less energy. It has been important for him to know what it is you can and can not change in order to be effective in his position. The majority of people will not be downsizing their homes and energy consumption just to conserve energy.

Town Councilman Schrumm shared his wish list for Cheshire with Commissioner Esty: 1. A natural gas pipeline station 2. Linear Trail expansion through to West Main Street should be sped up 3. The prison / WPCA permit violation that has been going on for years should be corrected 4. Increased hunting of deer should be addressed to address the public's health concerns.

Commissioners Esty replied to Councilman Schrumm's wish list by saying that is was not sure if the natural gas pipeline station that had once been proposed in the north end of Cheshire would come back around but noted that the State governor is now very much in favor of infrastructure improvements. As for the Linear Trail expansion delays, Commissioner Esty stated that he would look into it but agreed that the expansion is a long time coming. He also commented that the issue with the prison in Cheshire and the WPCA should be correct but was not under his control. With regards to the deer population, Commissioner Esty agreed that there is an over abundance of deer in Connecticut and he has proposed to allow hunting on Sundays as a means to wild life management.

Chairman Pelletier asked about conservation initiatives for residents with low income to help with the purchase / installation of newer, more efficient furnaces. Commissioners Esty replied that there are incentives for homeowners through green banks but noted that many below income families do not own their homes, they rent so they need to work on getting landlords to make the improvements to their properties. Chairman Pelletier mentioned a recent pilot program that was done in Waterbury address this situation.

Members thanked Commissioner Esty for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Chairman Pelletier suggested that a representative from Yankee Gas could come to the January 2014 Commission meeting to discuss future development plans for Cheshire. Commissioners would also like to invite representatives from W/S Development to speak to the Commission about the final site development plans that were recently submitted to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

C) CT Fastrack

Mr. Sitko reported that he is working with W/S Development and CT Fastrack to possibly establish bus stop(s) in the development that W/S Development has proposed for the north end of Cheshire.

D) Regional Planning Organization Consolidation

Mr. Sitko reported that there are currently 13 area Council of Government branches but in the next few months there will be a re-organization and the Council of Government branches will be shrinking down to 8. Cheshire is currently part of the Council of Governments of Central Naugatuck Valley; the Office of Policy and Management has recommended Cheshire be combined into the Valley or Bridgeport district. Council of Governments of Central Naugatuck Valley has recommended aligning with the Valley district but Town Manager Milone and Mr. Sitko have also met with the New Haven Council of Government as an option. Cheshire should know more on where it will belong in early 2014 from the Office of Policies and

Management. There is a 30-day appeal process available, if Cheshire should chose to do so once a decision has been made.

E) Liaison Reports

Mr. DeJongh, Inland / Wetlands Commission Liaison stated that business has been picking up, adding that violations pick up too with increased business.

Mr. Schrumm, Town Council Liaison, stated that the new Town Council will be meeting for the first time tonight. He noted that there have been some set backs in the expansion of the Linear Trail. Mr. Schrumm noted his continued aggregation and frustration in dealing with the regulatory process. He reminded Commissioners that the Town is responsible for West Main Street to Jarvis Street and the State of Connecticut is responsible for Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street and Jarvis Street to the Southington town line. Mr. Schrumm added that it could be 2015 before the Town can break ground with the project expansion of the Linear Trail.

F) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that Ball & Socket Arts project has received Planning & Zoning approval for a text change. He also noted that a remediation grant had been received by the Town for the Ball & Socket property.

Marbridge Retirement Center is looking to demolish and expand on their current property and adjacent property for a 28,000 square foot facility on West Main Street. The Planning & Zoning Commission has closed the Public Hearing on this application and now they wait for a decision on the application.

W/S Development submitted its site development plans within the last month to Planning & Zoning, if approved; construction is expected to begin next year.

Housing Authority Insurance Group, located on Commerce Court, has received approval from the Town Council for tax incentive assistance for their recently approved 46,000 square foot building expansion at their current location at the end of the cul-de-sac. The Town Council has approved a 7-year tax break of \$ 295,000. Housing Authority Insurance Group currently has about 160 employees and is expected to top out around 180 or 190 employees. Mr. Sitko noted that they were approved for a tax incentive with their last addition, in 2003, but the company never pursued it.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that John Hilzinger has an application in with Planning & Zoning to build a 19,500 square foot warehouse facility on Blacks Road. He also informed the Commission that the south end US Postal Service location at 1074 South Main Street will be closing. Mr. Sitko is looking into other south end locations to re-locate this Post Office business.

There are articles in this meeting's packet regarding Barker Specialty and Cheshire Public Schools program with local manufacturers for Commissioners to review.

G) Other

Commissioners wished everyone Happy Holidays and Chairman Pelletier thanked all the Economic Development Commission members for all their work during the past year.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Stanley to adjourned the November 19th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:55 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Pelletier.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary