

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2014 AT 7:30 A.M.  
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, David Orsini, Steve Sidoruk, William Stanley and Ray Voelker

Commissioner Absent:

Robert DeJongh and Robert Formica

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; Walter Gancarz, Operations Manager/Town Engineer (departed at 8:30 a.m.)

Others Present:

Lloyd Duggan of Yankee Gas (departed at 8:30 a.m.); Lynn Vazquez of Yankee Gas (departed at 8:30 a.m.), Rich Ogurick, Chairman of the Energy Commission (arrived at 7:40 a.m. and departed at 8:30 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 – Regular Meeting December 17, 2013**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the December 17, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted with the correction noting that Mr. Voelker was not absent from the meeting, he was in fact present. **SECONDED** by Mr. Orsini.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

## **VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **VII. BUSINESS**

### **A) Discussion with Yankee Gas**

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Lloyd Duggan, Supervisor of Marketing for Yankee Gas and Lynn Vasquez, Community Relations Specialist for Yankee Gas to the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Duggan talked about the Comprehensive Energy Strategy that was approved by the Legislature and is available on the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection web site. Mr. Duggan explained that up until 2003, oil and gas prices were about the same or gas was slightly more expensive. In 2003, gas flipped and has since been least expensive compared to oil; gas has become the top fuel choice. Currently there is approximately 30% penetration in Connecticut for natural gas. There is now a 10-year plan to increase this allocation to 50% in Connecticut. Cheshire currently has 1600 natural gas customers, a mix of residential and commercial customers.

Yankee Gas has developed target groups to expand natural gas users. The first target group is for customers near a gas main and are low usage users. For customers in this group and within 150 feet of a gas main, there is no charge to extend the gas main but there is a 10% system expansion surcharge for 10 years. The second target group is customers outside the 150 feet from a gas main; there is a 30% system expansion surcharge for 10 years to help recoup the gas line expansion costs. The third target group focuses on larger facilities to expand their gas line to like schools, prisons, nursing homes, firehouses and large commercial facilities called "anchor loads".

Currently there is an 11% saturation in Cheshire for Yankee Gas customers. They will be starting a "Beat the Rush" campaign in March or April 2014 to start motivating potential new customers to switch over instead of waiting until the Fall. Yankee Gas has identified 299 customers in Cheshire that are in their first target group. Mr. Duggan noted that there currently in 43 miles of gas mains in Cheshire.

Mr. Orsini asked if there is a map available of where gas mains currently exist in Cheshire? Mr. Duggan replied yes but due to security concerns it is not disclosed on the Yankee Gas web site. There is the ability to look up gas availability on the Yankee Gas web site by address, but on a limited basis.

Mr. Duggan explained that the Comprehensive Energy Strategy requires Yankee Gas expand their gas mains to 82,000 new customers over the next 10 years. Chairman Pelletier mentioned that there is a new development going in on the North end of Cheshire, and he suggested that Yankee Gas work with W/S Development to expand gas lines to the project.

There was some discussion of financing and loans that may be available for new customers looking to connect to gas service as well as manufacturing rebates that may be available starting this Spring. The estimated cost for a basic install would be \$7,500 and there are potential rebates and incentives of \$1,200 to \$2,500 that will be available.

Mr. Stanley asked if Yankee Gas was working with towns that may be taking up roads for other utility work? Mr. Duggan replied that yes, Yankee Gas try to coordinate with such work because some towns have moratoriums on waiting to cut a road after it has been re-paved.

Mr. Duggan talked about [www.lwantnaturalgas.com](http://www.lwantnaturalgas.com) as a location that customers could go to commit to converting to natural gas if gas mains are expanded in your area.

Mr. Gancarz asked if Yankee Gas could provide a layer for the new GIS mapping program for Cheshire that would be restricted access only for gas main locations in Cheshire, which would be helpful in planning re-paving projects in Cheshire. Mr. Duggan stated that as soon as Yankee Gas knows about a potential paving project, they will work with towns to do their best to coordinate these types of projects. He also talked about the pressure put on Yankee Gas to tighten their estimates for work to expand gas mains. If Yankee Gas is over 20% from the estimated costs, they will now have to absorb the overage instead of passing it along to the customer.

Mr. Gancarz talked about the Town's disappointment that this Summer while the State had North Brooksvale Road dug up that Yankee Gas would not expand the gas mains up the roadway, with Norton School ready to connect to the gas mains if they were brought up. He noted that Norton School had run gas piping under their parking lot last year when it was re-paved and with the church, school and high density homes in the area, it would have been beneficial to all involved. It was noted that Yankee Gas did an analysis and the project did not qualify for an incentive.

Rich Ogurick, Chairman of the Cheshire Energy Commission was present today and mentioned that there is a lot of interest in converting to natural gas. It was suggested that the Energy Commission may be an Ambassador for Yankee Gas and Mr. Ogurick invited Yankee Gas to attend an Energy Commission meeting.

Mr. Duggan encouraged the community to visit the web site [www.yankeegas.com/switchtogas](http://www.yankeegas.com/switchtogas) to do fuel cost calculations and to learn more about switching to natural gas

Members thanked Mr. Duggan and Ms. Vasquez of Yankee Gas for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning.

#### B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Commissioners would 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) Manufacturers and Cheshire Public Schools

Mr. Sitko reported that at the last School / Business Partnership meeting, discussion involved linking students from Cheshire Public Schools and local manufacturers. Currently the group is working with counselors at Dodd Middle School to promote the manufacturing industry. Dodd Middle School is hoping to re-vamp 'Career Day' where they can show students and parents some of the manufacturing job opportunities, to discuss the good incomes available and to explain that manufacturing is no longer the dirty, messy job it used to be.

### D) Regional Planning Organization Consolidation

Mr. Sitko reported that the 13 towns, including Cheshire, in the Council of Government Central Naugatuck Valley branch and 4 other towns (Ansonia, Derby, Seymour and Shelton) from the Valley COG have agreed to voluntary merger. Both COGS will have to vote to merge and form a new Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. In addition, Cheshire's Town Council would have to adopt a COG ordinance to join the Naugatuck Valley COG. Mr. Sitko estimated that it would take approximately 1 year to finalize the merger with all the towns involved.

### E) Business After Hours

Mr. Sitko informed the Commissioners that the Town of Cheshire is looking into hosing a Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours program in the next several months. A date is still to be determined but Mr. Sitko will share any additional planning information when it is available.

### F) Liaison Reports

There were no liaisons present at this meeting of the Economic Development Commission.

### G) Coordinator's Report

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.

Macy's recently laid off 151 employees in Cheshire in an effort to reduce duplication across the company.

W/S Development has started reviewing its final site development plans with the Planning & Zoning Commission. If approved, groundwork will likely begin this Fall and building permits will probably start in the Spring 2015.

Mr. Sitko talked about Consolidated Industries' plans to install new programmable hydraulic hammers in their existing shop, while phasing out their old hammers, now that they have withdrawn their application from Planning & Zoning for a new 10,000 square foot building. He noted that the plans of Consolidated Industries have gotten the attention of their neighbors.

Mr. Sitko was happy to report that the Town of Cheshire has received the designation "Certified Local Government" from the United States Department of Interior.

Marbridge Retirement Center's plans to demolish and expand on their current property and adjacent property for a 28,000 square foot facility on West Main Street was approved on January 13<sup>th</sup> by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Mr. Sitko reported that Ball & Socket Arts project has brought in rough site plans to the Planning Department and they are working on parking options for the property.

Yankee Gas has been doing some work at their vaults at the intersection of Main Street and Highland Avenue. As result of the work, they have presented Bob Ceccolini, Director of the Parks & Recreation Department with a check for \$10,000 to be used toward plantings and improvements at the parklet where the vaults are located.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commissioners that the GIS mapping system is up and available to the public on the [www.Cheshirect.org](http://www.Cheshirect.org) web site.

There are articles in this meeting's packet for Commissioners to review including ones related to Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Connecticut's Small Business Climate and the Advanced Placement Honor Roll.

H) Other

Mr. Sitko announced that the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce will be hosting W/S Development at their Annual Meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>. If any member of the Economic Development Commission would like to attend, they should let Mr. Sitko know.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION** by Mr. Orsini to adjourned the January 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:55 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Stanley.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski  
Recording Secretary