

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2014 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioner Absent:

Michael Ecke, David Orsini and Lori Rusnack,

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Ben Boylan, Vice President Business Information of Coface (departed at 7:55 a.m.); David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison (arrived 7:50 a.m.); Arthur Hostage, Chamber of Commerce Liaison;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:33 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 March 18, 2014

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the March 18, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted with the following correction: the departure time for Mr. Voelker should be 8:35 a.m.). **SECONDED** by Mr. Voelker.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Pelletier asked Mr. Stanley and Mr. Sidoruk to meet as a Subcommittee to propose officers of the Economic Development Commission, which will be presented at the next Commission meeting.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Representative of Coface

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Ben Boylan, Vice President Business Information for Coface to the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Boylan explained that Coface's main business is to insure accounts receivable from non-payment. Coface has been in existence since the late 1940's and is a French company. The Cheshire division is responsible for credit insurance and credit report generation. Credit information for companies is now provided to businesses via credit reports and credit opinions and scores. Coface performs these credit services for businesses only.

Mr. Stanley asked if Coface does its own research or if they use outside services? Mr. Boylan replied that it is a combination of the two.

Mr. Sitko asked how Coface handled the auto industry fallout a few years ago and Mr. Boylan replied that Coface stayed out of it because it was not a healthy, insurable risk.

Chairman Pelletier asked why Coface chose Cheshire for its new location? Mr. Boylan replied that it was partially self-serving. Coface had been located in Bristol for 15 years and then it merged with a Stamford business in a New Haven location. Mr. Boylan stated that he lives in Burlington, the commute to New Haven every day was incredibly long. The lease in New Haven was up and Mr. Boylan wanted to shorten his commute while still allow the existing employees to have a minimal impact on their new commute. Cheshire was a better location option for Mr. Boylan and the location on Highland Avenue worked for Coface.

Mr. Sitko asked if Coface works with the State or local governments and Mr. Boylan replied occasionally but most municipalities are very little credit risk.

Mr. Boylan encouraged Commissioners to visit Coface's website at www.coface-usa.com.

Members thanked Mr. Boylan of Coface 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 in May, for their televised meeting, about the final site development plans that were recently submitted to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Some additional suggestions for the future meetings were Macy's, Pratt & Whitney or Yale's new business & technology group. Mr. Schrumm also suggested Bozzuto's.

C) W/S Development

Mr. Sitko reported that W/S Development recently announced that they are partnering with Tanger Outlet Center for their project in Cheshire. W/S Development's application is currently going through the Water Pollution Control Authority approval process. Mr. Sitko stated that representatives from W/S Development are also planning to meet with representatives from the DOT to try to coordinate their bus services in or near the development site.

Once all approvals are in place, W/S Development will likely start moving earth on the project site by the Fall of 2014 and building will be done in phases, likely starting in the Spring of 2015.

D) Manufacturers and Cheshire Public Schools

Mr. Sitko reported that there will be a School / Business Partnership meeting with local manufacturers on April 23rd at 11:00 am at Dodd Middle School. Mr. Hostage commented that this group could lead to an important connection with the potential for financial assistance to the Cheshire Robotics teams from local businesses.

E) Regional Planning Organization Consolidation

Mr. Sitko reported that the formation of the Naugatuck Valley Planning Region Council of Governments continues to move forward. In addition, Cheshire's Town Council will have a draft ordinance in front of them soon, which will have to be adopted to join if Cheshire would like to join the Naugatuck Valley COG. Mr. Sitko noted that Town Manager Milone recently sent a letter to the South Central Regional Council of Governments to ask for a written list of key benefits that the SCRCOG may offer Cheshire as another option to consider. The Town Council will need to review and approve a new Ordinance by January 1, 2015 to be part of any Council of Governments.

F) Incentive Policy

Mr. Sitko is preparing a report for the Incentive Policy Committee of Mr. Sidoruk, Mr. Stanley, Mr. Hostage and Chairman Pelletier to include information on incentives provided by surrounding towns. A meeting of the Committee will be held in the next 2 to 3 weeks in order to develop a recommendation to the full Economic Development Commission. Once the Economic Development Commission makes an approval it will be forwarded to the Town Council for their approval. Mr. Sitko noted that the current Incentive Policy for Cheshire expires on June 30, 2014.

G) Broadcasting Board and Commission Meetings

Commissioners noted that the next Economic Development Commission is scheduled for May 20th in Town Council Chambers and will broadcast on the Government Access Channel.

H) Liaison Reports

Mr. Schrumm, Liaison of the Town Council reported that the 2014-2015 Operating Budget was recently approved by the Town Council. He noted that the Grand List is down this year for commercial and residential property, adding that larger homes' values fell more than modest homes which will result in a shift in the residential demographics.

Mr. Schrumm noted that the Community Pool enclosure approvals and plans are making progress and the 3 year long upgrade project at the Waste Water Treatment Plant is underway. There are some environmental issues with the existing window caulking at the WWTP being recently flagged by the Federal Government as a hazard.

Mr. Schrumm informed the Commissioners that the State will be paying to re-design the Route 10 and Route 322 intersection and it is supposed to be timed with the opening of W/S Development's project.

I) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that he submitted a STEAP grant application several weeks ago for expanding the sidewalks on West Main Street and should hear back by September 15th. He has also applied for separate grant funds from the Main Street Investment Fund for the same project.

Mr. Sitko has been working to find a new south-end post office substation since the closing of the Timberline location. He stated that he has tried to put the USPS and Staples together for this cause but the USPS has not heard from Staples. If Big Y moves into Everybody's market, Mr. Sitko may approach them about a possible substation for the USPS in the south end of Cheshire.

Jordan Caterers recently closed their business on Highland Avenue. The Town is working with the owners to resolve the balance that is due on the tax incentive they received when they built their addition, hopefully by April 30th

Mr. Sitko reported that the DECD is presenting a program on April 23rd on CT Economic Development Strategy from 8:30 am until Noon at Rentschler Field. This event is open to any Economic Development Commissioner that wants to attend.

Ball & Socket Arts has recently received a significant estimate for the hazardous materials remediation of the property. They are looking to now re-negotiate the purchase price of the property based on these estimates. The group is also working through their financing options.

Mr. Sitko noted that Paul Bowman is going forward with his plans to replicate the former Keeler House on South Main Street, with the recent re-approval from the Historic District Commission.

J) Other

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Stanley to adjourned the April 15th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:25 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Pelletier.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary