

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

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Derek Gromko, Dan O’Connell, William Stanley and Ray Voelker

Commissioner Absent:

Steve Sidoruk

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

John Nozell, Headmaster of Cheshire Academy (departed at 8:15 a.m.); David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison (arrived at 7:40 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. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stanley to elect David Pelletier as Chairman, Daniel O'Connell as Vice Chairman and Steven Sidoruk as Secretary of the Economic Development Commission. **SECONDED** by Mr. Voelker.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

## **VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting March 17, 2015**

**MOTION** by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the March 17, 2015 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Voelker.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

## **VII. COMMUNICATIONS**

Chairman Pelletier noted that Michael Ecke resigned from the Economic Development Commission effective March 19, 2015.

## **VIII. BUSINESS**

### A) Discussion with Cheshire Academy

Chairman Pelletier welcomed John Nozell, Headmaster at Cheshire Academy to this morning's Economic Development Commission meeting.

Mr. Nozell thanked Commissioners for inviting him to today's meeting. He explained that he has a business background, compared an education background that most of the recent Headmasters at Cheshire Academy had. During the most recent search for a Headmaster, the Board decided it wanted to find someone with a business background to run the school like the business of a school. Mr. Nozell noted that his first mission when he arrived at Cheshire Academy was to institute calm and stability to the campus. In the 2 years leading up to his arrival, there had been a 20-30% faculty turnover rate. Now moral is good at Cheshire Academy and he feels the school is moving in the right direction.

Mr. Nozell explained that Cheshire Academy has students from 34 different countries and 17 states. Two-thirds of the students are boarding students and the other one-third are day students that come each day from as far away as Westport. Cheshire Academy has a strong athletics program. At capacity, Cheshire Academy has 400 students and Mr. Nozell noted that there is a strong level of interest for admissions each year. Cheshire Academy has 150 employees, 80 of which are teachers.

Mr. Nozell talked about future plans for Cheshire Academy. Just prior to his hiring, the Board completed a Strategic Plan, which is meant to shape what the school will be over the next 10-15 years. The Board is happy with its maximum enrollment of 400 students, if there is any growth in enrollment it would only be about 10% over the next 10 years.

Mr. Nozell explained that a sense of community is important at Cheshire Academy. He talked about the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, which the key feature is an assessment process that test students on what they know about a given subject compared to an Advanced Placement Program that that tests a student to see if they know.

Chairman Pelletier asked if there were any plans to expand on the Cheshire Academy's 104 acres campus? Mr. Nozell replied that Cheshire Academy could use some more faculty housing in a non-dormitory setting. The school does already have the land to do this. Cheshire Academy also needs a proper Performing Arts venue. Mr. Nozell talked about the master facility plan that was done by an architect about 3-5 years ago, which included a Performing Arts Complex. Cheshire Academy also needs to upgrade it athletic building, which is from the 1960's.

Mr. Sitko asked Mr. Nozell if he knows why there was such turmoil and turnover a few years ago at Cheshire Academy? Mr. Nozell felt it may be been a result of the Board of Trustees being fraught with politics; even though there was a lot of passion for the school, there were different opinions and beliefs on how the school should be run, which lead to conflict. Cheshire Academy is rebuilding the Board of Trustees with a focus on Best Practices for Governance.

Chairman Pelletier asked how Cheshire Academy compares in size to Choate Rosemary School or Taft School? Mr. Nozell replied that there are approximately 650 students at Choate but he was unsure of the size of Taft. Mr. Nozell mentioned that Cheshire Academy's class size is on the small size, with no classes having over 15 students at one time.

Mr. Nozell noted that the Commencement Speaker at Cheshire Academy's graduation will be the Chairman of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Class of 1961 Cheshire Academy Graduate, Jeff Furman. He also noted that J. P. Morgan attended Cheshire Academy and was a Trustee during the last 9 years of his life from 1904-1919, although he was not a graduate of Cheshire Academy.

Chairman Pelletier thanked Mr. Nozell for coming to speak with the Economic Development Commission this morning.

#### B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Commissioners suggested inviting Sylvia Nichols, of Connecticut Florist Association to the next Economic Development Commission meeting.

#### C) CTfastrak

CTfastrak started running at the end of March this year with stops at both commuter lot location in Cheshire. Mr. Sitko stated that he will send out material about CTfastrak to

Cheshire's major employers in June to make sure they employers and their employees are aware of this new bus service.

Chairman Pelletier commented that CTfastrak could use some more marketing to help increase ridership.

#### D) C-PACE

Mr. Sitko shared an email exchange from mid April that he had with Alysse Lembo-Buzzelli of CT Clean Energy regarding interest in the C-PACE program from Cheshire property owners. Mr. Sitko stated that he would be putting together another mailing in early May to remind Cheshire's commercial and industrial property owners about the Commercial & Industrial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program.

#### E) Cheshire Public Schools and Career Paths

Mr. Sitko stated that Mike Kelly, a Cheshire High School teacher from the Business Department called him last week looking for contact information for Alexion Pharmaceuticals because several teachers are interested in visiting with Cheshire companies, starting with Alexion. The teachers are looking to learn about career opportunities and the skills necessary to obtain future employment at these companies. Mr. Kelly also talked about an interest in touring some of the Cheshire businesses with groups of students, if possible.

Mr. Sitko stated that he shared the Economic Development Commission's interest in this type of joint venture with the schools and local businesses. Mr. Kelly would like to work with the Commission to develop a plan for teacher meetings at companies with tours for students.

Chairman Pelletier stated that he thought this was a great idea and encouraged moving this program ahead soon, for the end of the school year or at least have it ready to move forward at the beginning of the next school year.

#### F) Program with Connecticut Department of Labor

Mr. Sitko stated that he is working with a Business Services Specialist with the Connecticut Department of Labor on a program to familiarize Cheshire companies on the variety of services and programs provided by the Department of Labor. He is hopeful that the program will occur on either June 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup>. This will likely be a morning event and a location has not yet been finalized. Mr. Sitko stated that he would be partnering with the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce for this program.

#### G) Liaison Reports

Town Council Liaison, David Schrumm, was present to speak with the Commission about recent activity of the Town Council. Mr. Schrumm stated that the Town Council approved the 2015/2016 Operating Budget last week, which calls for a 1.5% increase of taxes after a 3.3% increase in the coming year's Operating Budget. Councilman Schrumm stated that this is the 6<sup>th</sup> year that Cheshire's tax increase has been under 2% annually.

#### H) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko stated that W/S Development continues to be committed to their proposed project in the Interchange Zone and it is expected that they will start pulling permits between May and July to get started.

Mr. Sitko reported that work on expanding the Linear Trail from West Main Street to Jarvis Street will start up again after frog-mating season is over. The Jarvis Street to Southington town line section is going out to bid soon and everyone is hopeful it will be finished by the end of next year.

Mr. Sitko stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission has approved a proposal for a 17,000 square foot day care facility on Route 10 near Blacks Road that would hold up to 196 kids.

The Town has hired an Engineer to help design 1800 linear feet of sidewalk along West Main Street, 600 of which will require retaining walls.

Mr. Sitko stated that 2 properties on Fieldstone Court are under contract for a smaller office building. The former Rappaport property on Highland Avenue, just past the former Jordan Caterer building, is under contract for a medical building. An indoor tennis facility is looking at a building on East Johnson Avenue.

#### I) Other

None.

### IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pelletier adjourned the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski  
Recording Secretary