

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2015 AT 7:30 A.M.  
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
ROOM 207/209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Derek Gromko, Steve Sidoruk and Ray Voelker

Commissioner Absent:

Dan O’Connell and William Stanley

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; Michael Milone, Town Manager  
(departed at 8:16 am)

Others Present:

Peter Goia, Vice President and Economist at CBIA (departed at 8:20 a.m.); Paul Bowman,  
Town Council (departed at 8:30 a.m.); Michael Ecke, Town Council Liaison

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:32 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. WELCOME TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN ROBERT ORIS AND TOWN  
COUNCIL LIAISON MICHAEL ECKE**

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

**MOTION** by Mr. Sidoruk that the minutes from the November 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. APPROVAL OF 2016 MEETING DATES**

**MOTION** by Mr. Sidoruk to approve the Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting Dates for 2016 as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Voelker.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

## **VIII. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications directly to the Economic Development Commission.

## **VIII. BUSINESS**

### A) Discussion with Peter Goia, Vice President and Economist at CBIA

Chairman Pelletier welcomed Peter Goia, Vice President and Economist at CBIA to the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Goia predicted that the Federal Reserve will raise the interest rates by 1 full point by the end of 2016 and maybe up 2 points by the end of 2017. He said that China and Russia will be big factors going forward.

Mr. Goia talked about the cost of gas and oil continuing to drop and explained that this is a result of increased productivity in the United States to supplement the Saudi Arabian oil that has also seen increased production. Mr. Goia predicts that oil prices will stay low until 2020, which has already resulted in record car sale numbers.

Mr. Goia stated that all private sector jobs lost in the recession have been recovered by the government sector jobs are slower to recover.

The State of Connecticut needs to start looking at other states that are able to offer less expensive health care costs and we need better fiscal responsibility in the State Government.

Chairman Pelletier mentioned that in the Tax Bill that was passed at the end of June 2015 eliminated net losses and eliminated losses on Research and Development but what was slipped into the Bill at the last minute was a write off for

GE's built up losses. He noted that this Tax Bill really hurt the small businesses, that can't afford to these changes while helping out a large corporation that can afford it.

It was noted that many financial advisors are telling companies it is in their best interest to leave Connecticut.

Commissioners talked about the need to educate youth on the other career choices that don't involve a four year college or maybe just a technical school or on the job training and apprentice programs. Manufacturing, construction, plumbing, electrical and HVAC trades are all seeing a large decrease in the employee pool. Chairman Pelletier talked about the Commission's desire to start stressing these options to students at the High School and Middle School. It was agreed that anyone that has the right educational background can lead to success in any field of work.

Mr. Goia mentioned that the State needs to spend effectively in the inner cities on education. Mr. Ecke asked if with the State deficit, it doing anything to it's workforce? Mr. Goia stated that there seems to be a lot of discussions happening behind closed doors. He noted that union contracts are up for renewal in 2017, which means that negotiations will begin next year and will be very interesting to watch. Right now, State employees get lifetime medical insurance if they are employed by the State for 10 years or more. It was also noted that there is no Constitutional right to a pension in Connecticut but there is this right in some states.

Commissioners talked about the long process for approvals from the State Departments for permits which has been a hindrance for businesses looking to expand in Connecticut, such as Alexion taking their manufacturing to Rhode Island instead of staying in Connecticut after being told by the DEEP that permits would take 18 months to be reviewed.

Mr. Bowman asked Mr. Goia for his thoughts on housing in Connecticut. Mr. Goia noted that affordable housing is very important; the challenge is the housing supply and the mortgage approval process. He noted that people are starting to marry later in life and having kids later in life.

Mr. Goia invited the members to the CBIA Economic Summit Outlook planned for January 8<sup>th</sup> in Hartford, at the CBIA member price. Mr. Sitko thanked him for the invitation and let Economic Development Commission members know that the Commission would pay for any members that would like to attend the Summit. He also mentioned an Economic Summit planned for January 28<sup>th</sup> at the Palace Theatre in Waterbury, if the members were interested in this event, too.

Chairman Pelletier and the Commissioners thanked Mr. Goia for coming to speak to them this morning.

#### B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Commissioners suggested inviting a local grower, UTC Aerospace or HD Segur Insurance to future meetings of the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Sitko stated that he would try a local grower for the next Commission meeting.

#### C) Economic Analysis / Plan

Chairman Pelletier stated that he, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Gromko and Mr. Sitko met a few weeks ago to review incentives that other, surrounding towns offer and work on the Economic Analysis project for Cheshire. Mr. Gromko noted that it was interesting to see what other towns offer. Mr. Sitko stated that he would like to continue meeting on a monthly basis with this group.

Mr. Sitko would also like this group to look into marketing options for Cheshire. Town Council Liaison Michael Ecke stated that he would like to stay updated on the discussions of this group and asked to be informed when they would next be meeting.

#### D) Liaison Reports

Derek Gromko, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Liaison stated that they are talking about having a Business Appreciation Week event in 2016 for Cheshire to promote buying / shopping locally. It was suggested that this Commission and the Chamber could perhaps work together and coordinate their event with the Business Appreciation Day this Commission will be putting together.

Mr. Gromko also talked about the Chamber working on new Chamber of Commerce Member decals and mentioned that they would like to find 4 local sponsors for this project. Mr. Sitko stated, with the Commissions approval, he would like the Economic Development Commission to be one of the sponsors for the new decals signifying Chamber of Commerce members.

Michael Ecke, Town Council Liaison was present at this meeting and stated that the new Town Council has been busy this month appointing new leadership after the November elections as well as making Commission assignments to the Town Councils. He looks forward to working with the Economic Development Commission.

#### E) Coordinator's Report

There is an article in this meeting's packet regarding a new product by Alexion.

Mr. Sitko reported that Webster Bank is moving out of its West Johnson Avenue location to Southington in an effort to consolidate its facilities. The building is now up for sale.

PowerStation has applied for an incentive from the Town toward their 3,000 square foot addition to their location at 1718 Highland Avenue, the former Jordan Caterers location.

The Town of Cheshire has asked the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development for an extension on the deadline to complete the West Main Street sidewalk expansion project.

Mr. Sitko mentioned that the proposed outlet center for East Hartford has asked for financial assistance from Connecticut Innovations.

The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail expansion project continues in Cheshire. The first coat of paving is down from West Main Street to Jarvis Street, the final coat will be done in the Spring. The HAWK Street Crossing system will be installed at West Main Street in the Spring and the Jarvis Street to Southington town line will be done in the Fall 2016. The final stage of the project will be Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street.

Mr. Sitko informed that the Commission that the Dress Barn store in Maplecroft closed last weekend because it was under-performing. There is already some interest in the location.

Brand Nu, a biotech / pharmaceutical company out of Meriden now has warehouse space at 60 Fieldstone Court.

There are a number of articles included in this meeting's packet.

Mr. Sitko thanked the members of the Economic Development Commission for their time and service this year and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

#### F) Other

Town Councilor Paul Bowman thanked the members of the Economic Development Commission for their service this year and suggested as they work to review ways to better the Town, that they take a look at the local Regulations such as the Sign Regulations, which may need to be updated for the times. Mr. Bowman stated that he likes the ideas that he hears the Commission talking about this morning, noting that it is very difficult to get loans both residential and commercial with the changes passed in October. He also noted that there is an issue with the State's approval process in development and investors in the community. Mr. Bowman commented that how Cheshire is perceived outside of town is important, too, when reviewing economic development for the future.

Mr. Bowman thanked Mr. Sitko for the great job he does for Cheshire. Chairman Pelletier commented that he looks forward to working together in the coming year with the new Town Council and opening up the dialogue between the two groups.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Pelletier adjourned the December 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:40 a.m. He thanked the Commissioners for their service and wished them Happy Holidays.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski  
Recording Secretary