

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, March 15, 2016
7:30 a.m. – Room 207/209– Town Hall**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Derek Gromko, Lou Nero, Dan O’Connell, Steve Sidoruk, William Stanley and Ray Voelker.

Commissioner Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Bob Santy, Kristi Sullivan, and Alissa DeJonge – Representatives from CT Economic Resource Center (CERC).

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. WELCOME NEW STENOGRAPHER DAWN GUTE

Chairman Pelletier welcomed Dawn Gute to the Economic Development Commission.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 19, 2016

MOTION by Mr. Sidoruk that the minutes from the January 19, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Voelker.

The motion passed by all present.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

Business Appreciation Day will be held on June 23, 2016. Mr. Pelletier asked if the committee had met and discussed suggestions for names of speakers for the event. Discussion of speakers will be discussed when the committee meets.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Representatives of CT Economic Resource Center

Mr. Santy, Ms. Sullivan and Ms. DeJonge presented to the Economic Development Commission.

Mr. Santy gave a brief history of CERC explaining that it is a 25-year non-profit organization at the state level. During its growth, CERC enhanced its strategic direction by recruiting businesses to Connecticut and providing municipal services to towns that do not have economic development resources.

Mr. Santy said that based on previous discussions and highlights of the proposal, the first step is for the town to participate in a focus group. The goal is to bring community leaders and business representatives together to confirm the town's mission. The town's mission is determined through brainstorming/focus group which will provide background information. A targeted industry study, using quantitative data, will show if current trends fit the needs of stakeholders and refine the marketing plan and economic development strategy. CERC will also review Cheshire's current economic development efforts and present on its findings which will be a foundation for brand identity and planning.

Based on the findings CERC will provide recommendations for next steps to implement the brand through various methods of communication, i.e., website, social media and community outreach.

CERC will then develop 3-4 creative concepts reflecting the brand implementation and 2 rounds of edits to finalize a logo/tagline. The creative team looks at what is unique about a town and uncovers why and what keeps people here. The team works hand in hand with a point person in town to be sure that all information is validated with research.

CERC will expand on the branding plan with a marketing strategy including target audiences, messaging, metrics and tactics. The strategy may include online advertising, leveraged partnerships, events and PR/outreach. CERC support can be ongoing. The timeframe for this phase is 2-4 weeks.

The cost for phase one and phase two of the project is \$14,250 and \$17,250, respectively.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Arnett Talbot, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager/Public Information Officer, will attend the April meeting to review the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requirements with the Commission.

C) Economic Analysis/Plan

The Commission members discussed what can be controlled and replaced as companies come to town and leave town. A plan needs to be in place to retain residents and businesses so that revenue is not lost. It needs to define "where we are now and where we want to be." It has to be concise and proactive where current companies are approached and asked about future plans. Based on the CERC proposal, rebranding is not a key driver.

Mr. Sitko spoke with Mr. Skinner, the CAO for the town of Canton, about its marketing plan. Canton hired an outside consulting firm for this activity and Mr. Skinner will forward a draft of the firm's findings to Mr. Sitko. The Commission members are in agreement that several proposals and quotes should be obtained.

Chairman Pelletier asked for this conversation to be continued next week with the committee.

D) Business Appreciation Day

Business Appreciation Day will be held on June 23, 2016. Nick Perna and Governor Malloy were suggested as speakers.

E) Cheshire Chamber's Support Local Businesses Initiative

Mr. Gromko said that the "Be Loyal to Local" campaign mailer will be sent in mid-April along with yard signs being placed to kick off the campaign. The campaign will piggy back on the Business Appreciation Day and an activity is being planned.

F) 2015 Grand List

Mr. Sitko said that the Grand List grew by .87% which is in keeping with other towns. Other towns have had growth of .44 - .45%.

G) Election of Officers

Chairman Pelletier asked Mr. Sidoruk and Mr. Stanley to be on the nominating committee for the Election of Officers.

H) Liaison Reports

Representation is needed from the Town Council as it is critical for stream of communication. The current liaison has a work conflict and has been unable to attend several meetings. An alternate can be considered as back up; however, the current liaison will be asked if he can continue with his role.

I) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko said that there are companies interested in the Alexion property which will be vacated after 2017.

Mr. Sitko said that a company that is currently in Cheshire needs to make its intentions known about remaining in its facility by April 1.

The PowerStation's 3,400 square foot addition was approved by the Town Council for an incentive.

A STEAP grant fund application for additional parking at the linear trail has been submitted.

Construction on a 18,000 square foot building near Blacks Road for a day care may occur.

A 22,000 square foot addition at 15 Burton Drive has been approved so Tropicana can relocate. An incentive application has been submitted.

Viron Rondo Osteria is expanding and planning to add on 2,500 square feet. Bond refunding is in progress and Mr. Sitko will report back on the results.

J) Other

The Cheshire Food Pantry wants to raise \$400,000 during its capital campaign and is asking for contributions.

IX. Adjournment

Chairman Pelletier adjourned the March 15th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Guite
Recording Secretary