

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, May 17, 2016
7:30 a.m. – Room 207/209 – Town Hall**

Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioner Absent:

Ray Voelker

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Sheldon Dill, President, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce

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 accept the Slate of Officers. **SECONDED** by Mr. Nero.

The motion passed unanimously.

David Pelletier - Chairman
Dan O’Connell - Vice Chairman
Derek Gromko – Secretary

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

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

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

There was nothing to report.

VIII. BUSINESS

- A) Discussion with Sheldon Dill, President, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
Re: Update on Chamber Activities

Mr. Dill spoke of it being tough times for small and local businesses. The Chamber currently has 315 members. It is stable and retaining members where other chambers are losing members. It is having a challenge with sponsorships. The Chamber is unique in that it has a good relationship with the EDC, Jerry Sitko and Michael Milone. Activities receive good turnout (golf tournament, fall festival, etc.). Mr. Dill welcomed ideas for the Fall Festival scheduled on September 9 and 10. One idea is a laser show in place of fireworks which cannot be held because of the location of the town pool.

The “Be Loyal to Local” campaign was very successful. Mr. Gromko said the campaign was assisted by the marketing class at Cheshire High School. Mr. Dill distributed a brochure which was part of the campaign that highlighted discounts. Another campaign is planned. Phase II of “Be Loyal to Local”, will be a restaurant edition.

Mr. Dill would like local businesses to have more exposure to bids on local projects and is willing to assist by incorporating use of the Chamber website to post information announcing town bids. In addition, an idea is that electronic bid packages could be emailed to Mr. Dill who will then forward on to the Chamber members.

The Town of Cheshire website has a link for Requests for Bids Proposals.

Mr. Pelletier said that DAS contracts that are out to bid by state agencies are advertised and extended to businesses so that they have an opportunity to bid.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko suggested that Larry Bingaman, President of the South Central Regional Water Authority be invited as a future speaker. He was referred by David Bowery an elected representative. The Commission members are in agreement for Mr. Bingaman to be invited as a future speaker.

C) Economic Analysis/Plan

The Economic Development Sub-Committee members (Messrs. Pelletier, O'Connell and Gromko) met with Tripp Muldrow from Arnett Muldrow & Associates to discuss its proposal. Mr. Gromko said that from the proposals received, Arnett Muldrow & Associates is a good fit for the town. The Scope of Work is clearly explained and encompasses what the EDC wants to achieve, according to Mr. O'Connell. The EDC is interested in discussing Arnett Muldrow & Associates proposal at a future Town Council meeting. Mr. Sitko with talk to Mr. Milone to get his thoughts and to confirm whether this year's money budgeted for the proposal can be used if the project goes into the fall. In addition, the Commission members will reach out to those that they know on the Town Council to brief them on the proposal.

Arnett Muldrow & Associates did work for the Town of Canton and the City of Meriden and Mr. Sitko received positive feedback from Mr. Skinner, the CAO for the Town of Canton.

D) Business Appreciation Day

Business Appreciation Day will be held on June 23, 2016 from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. The guest speaker is Sunil Gulati, President of the U.S. Soccer Federation and Vice President of FIFA. Mr. Gulati is also a graduate of Cheshire High School and is a senior lecturer at Columbia University where he teaches principals of economics and global and sports economics. Mr. Sitko asked the Commission members what they would like Mr. Gulati to focus on during his speech. The members suggested a combination of soccer and business and economic mobility through sports.

Mr. Sitko is under way with logistics for Business Appreciation Day. He has developed a brochure with a mailing list to accompany it. It will be mailed out in 2 weeks and will appear on the chamber of commerce and town websites. Cheshire High School Soccer coaches have shown interest in attending.

A question was raised as to whether the oldest businesses (50 years or more) in town will be honored at the event. This is yet to be determined.

E) Tour of Macys Logistics

Mr. Nero gave a positive summary of the Macy's tour noting that the staff did an excellent job explaining to the students what is necessary to run a modern and efficient distribution center. In turn, the students were engaged, asked good questions, and took away ideas for future careers.

A panel discussion followed the tour with the Macy's executive team and further emphasized the importance of running an efficient distribution center and being a lifetime learner.

Concerns regarding transportation for employees to Macy's Logistics were also discussed. The EDC has had discussions regarding this in the past. A suggestion was made to think outside the box and engage a local transportation entrepreneur. A vanpool may also be a good fit for this situation.

F) Liaison Reports

Mr. Gromko said that the chamber of commerce finances are ahead of budget. He also reiterated what Mr. Dill spoke of regarding Chamber events; Phase II of "Be Loyal to Local" – Restaurants Edition, Golf Tournament, Carnival and Fall Festival.

G) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko said that the Plan of Conservation and Development will be discussed at the Town Council meeting on May 24. It will be an information discussion. Mr. Pelletier may be asked to attend the meeting.

There has been better response from the property owner representing a local aerospace company whose lease is up on September 1.

Mr. Sitko said that Nosal Builders in Durham is relocating to Cheshire and will be building a 25,000 square foot building on Fieldstone Court. An incentive has been approved by the town council. Nosal Builders will occupy 10,000 square feet and Shred-it will lease 15,000 square feet.

Quaker Sales & Distribution, Inc., representing Tropicana, has been approved for an incentive for a 20,800 square foot warehouse addition at 15 Burton Drive. Over three years the town will gain an estimated \$29,612 in new property tax revenue. The agreement will require a ten-year presence in Cheshire and maintenance of a minimum level of staffing of 13 for 3 years.

An application for a remedial action and redevelopment grant for \$750,000 for Ball & Socket Arts was submitted.

Janice White, in an email to Mr. Sitko, said that the U.S. Postal Service will not be adding any additional locations, including a satellite post office, in the south end of Cheshire.

A formal outreach campaign has begun by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. Mailers are being sent to over 15,000 Connecticut based companies with 10 employees or more to introduce DECD's ambassador.

The Ambassador Initiative's goals are to build relationships with companies so that they are aware of the various types of assistance available through the state and its partners. It will gather information on what companies like about doing business in Connecticut and how the state can improve the business climate.

Mr. Pelletier suggested that Deputy Commissioner Bart Kollen of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development be invited to speak at an upcoming Cheshire EDC meeting.

H) Other

There was nothing to report.

IX. Adjournment

Chairman Pelletier adjourned the May 17th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Guite
Recording Secretary