

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, September 20, 2016
7:30 a.m. – Room 207/209 – Town Hall**

Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioner Absent:

Mr. Pelletier

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Michael Ecke, Rob Oris and Bill Voelker.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O’Connell 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. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING – June 21, 2016

MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the June 21, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted.

SECONDED by Mr. Sidoruk.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Letter of July 29, 2016 from Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman E.J. Kurtz

Mr. Kurtz's letter stated that the Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted on Monday, July 27, 2016. Mr. Kurtz thanked the EDC for its support throughout the development of the Plan. The Plan will seek to implement the recommendations made and the EDC is welcome to provide input. Mr. Voelker commented that the amendments to the industrial zone in October will have impact on the Plan.

VII. BUSINESS

- a) Chapman Property

Mr. Pelletier and Mr. O'Connell asked that this be an item on today's agenda. Bill Voelker and Town Council Chairman, Rob Oris were present at today's meeting to take part in the discussion about the property prior to referendum scheduled on September 27, 2016. The referendum concerns the purchase of the 10-acre Chapman property which is adjacent to Bartlem Park. Mr. Sitko reminded the commissioners that in the past, the EDC has supported certain town issues including road and utility improvements and the library addition in the 90's. It is the decision of the EDC as to whether it will weigh in on the September 27th referendum. In detail, the ballot heading states:

“Shall the \$1,500,000 appropriation and bond authorization for acquisition of the Chapman Property (with the remainder of the \$3,000,000 purchase price to be paid from previously approved appropriations and bond authorizations of the Town) be approved”?

The Town has hired a consultant to conduct environmental testing which is scheduled to be completed in October. The hope was for completion of testing prior to the referendum date; however, minor issues resulted in a lapse of time. If testing finds that remediation is required, the Chapmans have agreed to pay \$200,000 toward remediation. If the contract were to be terminated, this money is refundable.

The Council has not formally decided what to do with this property. Land use would be for recreational, open space, conservation, educational and municipal purposes. Ideas for land use are being discussed.

While affordable housing is among the suggestions, Mr. Oris does not think it is the proper fit for use of the land. Traffic patterns in town will be affected. Calculations have determined that six trips per unit per day total 900. This is based on 150+ units.

MOTION by Mr. Voelker that the EDC endorse the purchase of the Chapman Property. **SECONDED** by Mr. Stanley.

The motion passed unanimously by all present.

Mr. O'Donnell will send a letter to Cheshire Herald saying that the EDC endorses the purchase of the Chapman Property.

A suggestion was made that the endorsement be posted on community television, the Town's website, and in the Cheshire Patch. Mr. Oris said that it has been posted by the Town Council and in the Op-ed information.

Mr. O'Donnell asked for a moment of silence to remember Mr. Arthur Hostage, a previous Chairman of the EDC.

b) Economic Analysis

Mr. Sitko presented a meeting schedule for Arnett Muldrow (Tripp Muldrow) scheduled for September 26, 27 and 28. These meetings will provide qualitative input about economic development in Cheshire. The aggressive schedule has meetings taking place with the EDC Steering Committee (2 meetings), local businesses, municipal and school representatives and the Chamber of Commerce. The EDC Steering Committee members are in place for these meetings.

c) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko will arrange a speaker for the next EDC meeting, possibly Tripp Muldrow from Arnett Muldrow.

d) Liaison Reports

Mr. Oris said that the Charter Revision (Review) will take place in early November with a committee in place. The committee will represent diversity, Town Council members, and the community. The Town has 30 days to establish a committee which can total 5 to 15 people. 25% of the committee will represent those who are in elected positions along with 2 Town Council members (representing each party – Democrats and Republicans). The Charter will be reviewed chapter by chapter where anything can be changed. It is been some time since the Charter has been reviewed. Public hearings will part of this process. It is an important guiding document for the Town so that it is up-to-date and competitive with the current business environment. Legal consultation will be hired to oversee that the committee is in alignment with State statutes and requirements. Review should be completed in August 2017 so that updates can go to the Town Council for a vote followed by a referendum in November 2017. It would help if the due date for the budget could be pushed back at least 30 days (from April to May) to coincide with the state budget. A suggestion was made that town commission terms be staggered – every 4 years rather than 2 years. Anyone who is interested in serving on the committee should contact Mr. Oris.

e) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko said that Fosdick Fulfillment signed a 3 year lease for over 130,000 SF at 181 West Johnson Avenue. Macy's occupies the other part of the building and attempts are being made to fill the remaining vacant office space. It is a good space as Alexion left behind the office furniture when it moved to New Haven.

Mr. Sitko said that Jake's Wayback has purchased 716 South Main Street which had been vacant for some time.

WANHO Manufacturing has leased an 80,000 SF space at 156 Knotter Drive. The business expects to bring approximately 25 new employees.

Mr. Sitko will be sending an announcement to the EDC Commission and to the Town Council inviting them to an Open House at Consolidated Industries which is scheduled in October. The Open House will include looking at their new equipment. 15-ton anvils will replace equipment that was purchased in the 1940's.

The town received a brownfields remediation grant for \$750,000 for the Ball & Socket Arts property. A DECD Financial Assistance Proposal for this will need to be approved by the town council. A second agreement will be with Ball & Socket Arts and the Town of Cheshire to confirm that conditions will be fulfilled.

Ball & Socket Arts is working to secure financing. This must be in place prior to any grant money being released to the Town.

Despite the fact that the Arby's property off of South Main Street has been cleaned up, there are no new businesses scheduled to take over the site. Mr. Sitko said, however, that businesses are showing interest.

Mr. Milone asked the EDC to prepare a list of things that he can talk to DOT Commissioner James Redeker about. Mr. Sitko provided a list of the following: the wall across from Dunkin Donuts on Route 10, the STEAP Grant for trail parking, and CTFAstrak to keep service in place at Route 691/Route 10. Mr. Sitko will get statistics on ridership of CTFAstrak.

Mr. Sitko provided a newspaper article about the successful Business Appreciation Day event with guest speaker Sunil Gulati.

A spreadsheet sent by Mr. Walters from the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority was provided showing the zoning acres in the protection area for the North Cheshire and South Cheshire Aquifer. What is not included in the numbers is a portion of the Southington Water Department Aquifer that extends into Cheshire. The well field requires attention as it is an environmentally sensitive area.

The West Street Sidewalk project is going well. This will create connectivity of the shopping centers, the trail and more. West Main Street should be avoided during this project.

The State's First Five Plus Program Report to create new jobs was provided for information.

Mr. Milone will be retiring. He has not asked for renewal of his contract.
Mr. Panagrosso has resigned as Assessor.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. O'Donnell adjourned the September 20th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Guite
Recording Secretary