

AGENDA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021
7:30 A.M.

Room 207 / 209

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Determination of Quorum
- IV. Pledge of Allegiance
- V. Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting – August 3, 2021
- VI. Communications
- VII. Business
 - 1. Zone Text Amendment Discussion
Speaker: William Voelker
 - 2. Tax Increment Financing Refresher
Speaker: Andrew Martelli
 - 3. TIF Management Committee Update
Speakers: Don Dobbs/Andrew Martelli
 - 4. Social Media/Website Enhancement
Speaker: Andrew Martelli
 - 5. Ball & Socket Arts Update
Speaker: Andrew Martelli
- VIII. Staff Report
- IX. Adjournment

**MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 3, 2021
ROOM 207
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Bill Stanley, Derek Gromko, Don Dobbs, Mark Thomas, Jami Ferguson and Yetta Augur

ABSENT: David Pelletier and Peter Nichols

STAFF: Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Stanley called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

The roll was called and a quorum was determined.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Dobbs to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gromko. All were in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

BUSINESS

Mr. Mark Thomas, Chamber of Commerce Liaison, spoke about upcoming activities. Among the activities mentioned were the Quinnipiac University marketing opportunity, a grant writing seminar on September 2, Fall Festival September 10 and 11, a discussion about affordable housing in Cheshire, scarecrows in Cheshire in October and also on September 30th Ms. Augur said she will be partnering with MidState Chamber to have a breakfast with registered members.

New Business

Ms. Talbot gave a very brief update on TIF (Tax Increment Financing). She said the town is in negotiations with the attorney and that the TIF application has not been formally submitted but basically all of the elements are in place.

Ms. Talbot also said that there was a new business in town located on West Johnson Avenue in the old Webster Bank building. They will employ 20 employees.

Ms. Augur then asked about packets that could be given to new businesses in town. Because the current packet is outdated, members felt that perhaps it would be good for Andrew Martelli, the new Coordinator of Economic Development and Grant Writing, to work on it.

Speakers for Future Meetings

Suggestions that were given for future speakers were Bozzutos, Cheshire Landscaping, Whippersnappers and Cheshire Academy. Ms. Ferguson suggested Positive Outlook. She said it was a business that had moved to Cheshire from Shelton. The company works with clients on a positive outlook after traumatic brain injuries and incorporates occupational therapy.

Members also noted several new businesses in town that include a cigar store, CBD and the Smitten Kitten. Perhaps they would also be interested in speaking with the Economic Development Commission at one of their meetings.

Staff Report

Ms. Talbot gave a brief report on Mr. Martelli, the new Economic Development Coordinator. She said he was an excellent choice and out of the seven interviews he was outstanding. He is a Cheshire native and is dedicated to the community. He also has experience in real estate, public speaking and grant writing. He will be starting

employment with the town on August 9 and his office will be located in the town manager's office. Mr. Stanley asked if it were possible to take time just to get acquainted with him. Ms. Talbot said that it was and August 17 was the date decided upon.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Stanley closed the meeting at 8:15.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gromko and seconded by Ms. Ferguson. All were in favor.

Attest:

Patricia W. Kuzmak, clerk
Economic Development Commission

To: Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Planning Staff

Re: Zone Text Amendments regarding Storage, Warehouses, and Distribution Centers with Trucking Facilities Incidental to the Main Use in the Interchange Zone

Date: August 25, 2021

Proposal

Attached are two new provisions offered for consideration as amendments to Section 48 (Interchange Zone Regulation) to permit warehouses and distribution centers with trucking facilities and a repeal of a portion of these regulations that prohibits these uses.

The Commission will recall the recent amendment offered to amend Section 48 (Interchange Zone) to enable storage, warehouses, and distribution centers with trucking facilities as permitted uses. While this application was withdrawn, the Commission may also recall that permitting these uses was mentioned within the Arnett/Muldrow report (copy attached) that was commissioned by the Cheshire Economic Development Commission in 2017. The Tactics portion of Section 7.2.1 recommends consideration of warehousing and distribution within the Interchange area.

In order to further this recommendation and to capitalize on any interest generated by the recent application, staff hereby offers an amendment to Section 48 (Interchange Zone) of the Cheshire Zoning Regulations to create new Section 48.2, h) permitting “storage, warehouses, and distribution facilities with trucking facilities incidental to the main use” to include “servicing of vehicles owned and/or operated by the owner of the facility and vehicles which may deliver to or take merchandise from the principal use of storage, warehousing and distribution center buildings” by Special Permit.

Servicing of vehicles would be available to vehicles owned and/or operated by an owner of the storage, warehousing, or distribution facility located on a site as well as vehicles that may come to the facility to deliver or pick up merchandise. Staff has been informed by the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles that owners who are servicing only their own vehicles will not need a state repairers permit, but will if they begin to service vehicles under other ownership that may bring merchandise to or carry merchandise from the site.

Significant portions of properties within the Interchange district are also located within the Aquifer Protection District (map enclosed) and many repairs would be excluded from portions of sites that are within the District. The Regional Water Authority continues to be our partner in the review of applications and the monitoring of activities.

In pursuit of this amendment, staff also reviewed the loading standards set forth within Section 33.2 (Loading Space Standards) of the Regulations for their consistency with the regulations

within the Interchange zone. Section 33.2 states that “no loading space or access thereto shall be located less than 20 feet from any property line, street line, or residential boundary line” in every district except for the Interchange zone. Warehousing and distribution are permitted in both Industrial zones with large portions of industrial properties abutting residential districts. These operations generally function without complaint. Section 48.4, b (Development Standards) of the Interchange regulations requires that loading areas “shall be located a minimum of seventy (70) feet from any property line,” and that “loading areas must be screened from adjacent streets and shall be located in such a way that in the process of loading or unloading, no truck will block or extend into any drive or street used for vehicular circulation. Loading and delivery zones shall be clearly marked.”

It should be noted that the 70-foot loading area setback was written with warehousing and distribution facilities being prohibited in the Interchange district. We advise that a 70-foot standard is consumptive, and the 20-foot standard will provide greater flexibility for site layouts. A parking spot for a trailer is a minimum of 55 feet long. A two-sided loading area would be 160 feet from curb-to-curb which would include two 55 bays for trailers and a 40-foot aisle between the bays. Adding 70 feet to this would require using 230 feet just to accommodate loading spaces depending upon the orientation to the boundary line. For comparison, a back-to-back layout for cars is only 60 feet with two 18-foot parking stalls and a 24-foot aisle width. We therefore propose using the same 20-foot standard that exists for loading areas in every other district with language that provides for screening and eliminates potential vehicular conflicts. The Commission also retains the ability to require modification of any layout as these uses can only be proposed under Section 40 (Special Permits) which enables the Commission to “attach such additional conditions and safeguards as are deemed necessary to protect the neighborhood.” This section states that the Commission may require greater setbacks, screening of parking and loading areas, modification of the exterior features of any structure, modification of outdoor lighting, and various other controls to facilitate protection of abutting properties.

The proposed Section 48.2, h, includes servicing of vehicles as accessory to the principal storage, warehousing, and distribution operations. Servicing is not to be made available to the general public, but only to those vehicles that are associated with the operation of the facility including those owned and operated by the owners of the facility and those who may be delivering directly to or picking up merchandise from. The extent of on-site servicing will be subject to review by the Commission during the Special Permit process. Section 48.2 will require that any mechanical work or that involving the exchange of fluids will be conducted within a building in a dedicated service area.

The proposed Section 48.2, h will also permit these facilities to include lots for the storage of vehicles and trailers which can be surfaced with alternatives to hard pavement including pervious pavement, crushed stone, compacted gravel and similar surfaces. These alternate surfaces can reduce the heat island effect of large paved areas and reduce and modify rapid stormwater runoff.

For reference, the 2016 Cheshire Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) includes a narrative describing the four principal quadrants of the Interchange area wrapped around the I-691/Route 10 interchange and shows these on the Interchange Focus Area map (attached).

The northwesterly quadrant has been rezoned to Interchange Special Development District (ISDD) to facilitate development of a mixed-use commercial center. A major portion of the northeasterly quadrant is owned by the State of Connecticut and includes a commuter parking lot. There are also three residential properties wedged between the interchange ramps and the commuter lot. The southwesterly quadrant is undeveloped and is owned by Bozzuto's, and the southeasterly quadrant is owned by a utility company whose intentions appear to be to remain on the property for an extended period.

The POCD includes discussion on the origins of the Interchange Zone developed in 1985 based upon a study entitled Land Use Analysis and Plan of the Development Surrounding the I-691/Route 10 Interchange written to create an overall strategy for the development around the interchange in anticipation of its completion. That study recognized the importance of the interchange in generating tax revenue and employment and predicted that office buildings, research centers, hotel/conference centers and other similar uses would be likely. The predicted mix of uses has not occurred and the 2016 POCD recognized this and states that "it is almost certain that changes will be requested." The 1985 vision for major office buildings, high-tech research centers, hotels and conference centers has been impaired by changing market conditions. The I-691/Route 10 interchange is designed to handle large volumes of traffic, including trucks. Improvements that may be required by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in their review of projects will be the responsibility of the applicants to pay for. Staff notes that these amendments are not in conflict with any provisions of the POCD. With consideration of the above narrative, we offer the following amendments to the Cheshire Zoning Regulations:

48.2, h): Storage, warehousing, and distribution center buildings with truck servicing and storage incidental to the main use. Said truck servicing and storage may provide for servicing of vehicles owned and/or operated by the owner of the facility and vehicles which may deliver to or take merchandise from the principal use of storage, warehousing and distribution center buildings. All servicing that involves mechanical work or the changing of fluids shall be conducted within a building in a dedicated service area. Such vehicle servicing shall not be available to the general public or any vehicles not associated with the operation of the principal use as described in the previous sentence. Storage, warehousing, and distribution centers may include lots for the storage of trailers. Said storage lots may be surfaced with pervious pavement, crushed stone, compacted gravel and similar surfaces to reduce stormwater runoff, and reduce the heat island effect.

Section 48.4, b): Off-Street Loading Areas: No loading space or access thereto shall be located less than 20 feet from any property line, street line, or residential boundary line. This setback requirement shall not apply for portions of properties that are adjacent to Interstate 691. Said loading areas must be screened from view from adjacent streets and shall be designed in such a way that in the process of unloading, no truck will block or extend into any drive or street used for vehicular circulation. Loading and delivery zones shall be clearly marked.

Repeal existing Section 48.2, b), 2) as it conflicts with the proposed uses by stating "Storage, warehouse uses, and distribution centers are prohibited except as incidental to a permitted use. Truck terminals are prohibited."