Commissioners Present:
Chairman David Pelletier, Lelah Campo (arrived at 7:45 a.m.), Brian Miller, David Orsini, Robert Sepp, and William Stanley

Commissioner Absent:
Richard Kaplan

Staff Present:
Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:
Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commission member; Robert DeJongh, Inland Wetlands Liaison; William Freitag, Chamber of Commerce Liaison; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison (arrived at 7:40 a.m.)

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 BILL FREITAG, CHESHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LIAISON

Chairman Pelletier welcomed Bill Freitag to the Economic Development Commission as the new liaison from the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 21, 2010
MOTION by Mr. Stanley that the minutes from the September 21, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as presented. SECONDED by Mr. Sepp.

VOTE: In Favor – Miller, Orsini, Pelletier, Sepp and Stanley
Opposed – None

The motion passed 5 – 0.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

A) Revised Membership List

A copy of the most up to date Economic Development Commission membership list was included in this meeting’s packet.

VIII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Tartaglia Commercial Properties (Cheshire Shopping Center)

Mr. Sitko informed the Cheshire Economic Development Commission that Ms. Tartaglia from Tartaglia Commercial Properties would be unable to join them this morning due to an illness.

B) Meetings with Cheshire companies

Mr. Sitko stated that School Superintendent Greg Florio will be at the December Economic Development Commission meeting and likely Dan Ford from Alderson Funeral Home at the January meeting. Commissioners talked about having an Economist at one of the Commission meetings in early 2011. Mr. Orsini suggested inviting a representative from Smart Grid to come to a Commission meeting to talk about electric and gas smart meters.

C) Pratt & Whitney

Mr. Sitko reported that Pratt & Whitney has started its union negotiations as the current contract with their machinists expires on December 5, 2010, but they are blacked out. There are some talks of a possible strike by the Pratt & Whitney union workers if a deal is not been reached. Contract workers have been hired in case of a strike by Pratt & Whitney.

The Pratt & Whitney facility on Knotter Drive is 294,000 square feet and there has already been some interest in the facility. Mr. Sitko talked about some enabling legislation for a defense / enterprise zone designation for the Cheshire Pratt & Whitney property.
D) Focus Group Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that the Manufacturer Focus Group meeting was held on September 28th, a summary was included in this meeting’s packet. There will be 3 additional focus group meetings held in early 2011 for the small businesses, local distributors and landscapers / contractors. After all of the meetings have been completed a wrap up report will be put together for Commissioners to review and then a presentation will be made to the Town Council.

E) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvements Project Update

Mr. Sitko reported that GPIC Construction has been doing a good job on the West Main Street Streetscape project and working with the businesses in the area. Phase 1 of this project is near completion; there may be some granite curbing added from Willow Street to Warren Street this month. CL & P owes the Town another 9 lighting fixtures for Phase 1 as only 4 are in, but not working yet. GPIC Construction is working on creating a punch list to help finish up Phase 1.

Phase 2 of the West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project will be sent to the Connecticut Department of Transportation this week for their review and approval. If the approval is received from the State in January, Mr. Sitko stated that he is hopeful that Phase 2 can go out to bid in February 2011 for construction this Spring / Summer.

A third STEAP Grant was awarded to Cheshire in the amount of $100,000 for this project, bringing the total Grant funding to $1,000,000.

F) Yankee Gas Upgrade Project

Mr. Sitko stated that West Main Street from Mountain Road to Ives Row will be milled and patch paved today and tomorrow, weather permitting. He added that the local businesses have been upset with the interruptions during the construction of the Yankee Gas Upgrade Project. This paving will likely be temporary until the Spring when the entire lane will be re-paved.

Yankee Gas has given the Town $19,000 towards repairing the brick sidewalks in the center of Town as well as $8,000 towards landscaping the parklet in the center of Town after their construction in the area.

G) Incentive Policy

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that the Incentive Policy Committee met last month to review the current Incentive Policy. The Committee is looking at other personal property abatement options, which Mr. Sitko is working with the Town Assessor on, such as telecommunication equipment and computer equipment.
H) Business Appreciation Day

The Business Appreciation Day Committee has sent a letter to a prospective guest speaker for the next Business Appreciation Day that will be held in May 2011. Once the speaker has been locked in, a date will be selected. The event will be held at Elim Park, who has also volunteered again to print the brochure for Business Appreciation Day. The Town will be recognizing businesses that have been in Cheshire for 50 years or more at the Business Appreciation Day event.

I) Liaison Reports

Mr. DeJongh, Inland Wetlands Commission Liaison, stated that his Commission has been very quiet.

Mr. Freitag, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Liaison, stated that he had nothing additional to report.

Councilman Schrumm, Town Council Liaison noted that the Town Council had their first budget meeting last night to layout the economic drivers for the Town and to review the Town’s Grand List and Pension Valuation. The Water Pollution Control Authority has chosen an Engineering Firm for the $30 million Plant Upgrade.

Councilman Schrumm talked about the preliminary expansion plans for the Linear Trail to extend north of West Main Street and the positive economic development impact it could have on West Main Street if walkers are brought to the area.

J) Coordinator’s Report

Mr. Sitko stated that Alexion Pharmaceuticals is continuing to grow and has plans before the Planning & Zoning Commission for a parking lot expansion. Cheshire Fitness Zone is looking to move from the Watch Factory to South Main Street near Higgins Road.

Mr. Sitko informed the Commission that he and Chairman Pelletier have joined the School / Business Partnership Program.

Mr. Sitko mentioned that Paul and Phil Bowman will be doing some emergency repairs to Earl Conti’s property on South Main Street, to help stabilize the 2 historic buildings before winter. He added that he is not sure what the buildings may be used for but any improvements to the buildings will be a positive development.

Mr. Sitko stated that the former Hartman / Hulteen property on South Main Street has new owners that are before Planning & Zoning to re-develop the property. Two medical condominium buildings with apartments on top will be constructed towards the back of the property; the existing building will remain.
The former Sunoco station property on the corner of Route 10 and Higgins Road is being remediated but this will take some time. There has been some talk of re-zoning that piece of property to a R-20A zone to make it more usable.

Mr. Sitko, Town Manager Milone and the Finance Department have made their annual presentations to the credit rating agencies and has had Cheshire’s bond rating re-affirmed, which is great news for the Town.

The newly constructed 14,700 square foot Rite Aid pharmacy on the corner of West Main Street / Main Street and Maple Avenue was opened last week. Their former location in Maplecroft Plaza has closed.

An application for incentive assistance from Heavyweight, Inc. has been received by the Town from John Hilzinger relating to an addition and new building, totaling 18,000 square feet, that will be constructed on his property to enclose the equipment on the site.

Mr. Sitko reported that W.S. Development has been quiet, regarding their plans for the North end of Town.

I) Other

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Orsini to adjourned the meeting at 8:30 a.m.; SECONDED by Mr. Miller.

VOTE: In Favor – Campo, Miller, Pelletier, Orsini, Sepp and Stanley
Opposed – None

The motion passed 6 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary