Commissioners Present:
Chairman Brian Miller, Lelah Campo (arrived at 7:40 a.m.), Kathleen Gannon, Richard Kaplan, David Pelletier and Thomas Scannell

Commissioners Absent:
None

Staff Present:
Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:
Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner, John Lesky, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Liaison; Bob DeJongh, Liaison for the Inland / Wetlands Commission; Douglas Rogers, Headmaster at Cheshire Academy (departed at 8:10 a.m.) and David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Miller called the meeting to order at 7:32 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 – December 15, 2009 Regular Meeting

MOTION by Mr. Pelletier that the minutes from the December 15, 2009 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as presented. SECONDED by Mr. Scannell.
VOTE: In Favor – Campo, Gannon, Kaplan, Miller, Pelletier and Scannell
    Opposed – None

The motion passed 6 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Sitko commented that there are numerous news articles embedded through the packet for Commissioners to review.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Presentation Re: Cheshire Academy

Douglas Rogers, Headmaster at Cheshire Academy, was present to speak to the Commission this morning. He stated that he started at Cheshire Academy last year and explained his experiences throughout the years, most recently coming from Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire. Mr. Rogers explained that Cheshire Academy was founded in 1794 and is amongst the oldest private secondary schools in the United States.

Mr. Rogers distributed the newly re-created Cheshire Academy magazine to Commissioners for their review, which has not been in print for over 4 years. Mr. Rogers is working to re-establish connections with Cheshire Academy Alumni which have been lost over the past few years. He continued to explain the Capital Campaign that Cheshire Academy has recently launched, which, quietly, has raised $.75 million since July 1st. In addition, there are verbal commitments for another $2.5 to 3.0 million. Currently there is some new faculty housing being established on the Cheshire Academy campus. Also, there are some renovations being done to the Borden House to make it a 2-bedroom house for faculty. Recently approved by the Board of Trustees was the approval to go ahead with plans for a student activity / athletic complex on campus. A new multipurpose turf field surrounded by a 6-lane track is also in the planning stages for the “heart of the campus”. In addition, a performing arts center is something else on Cheshire Academy’s wish list for the future.

Mr. Rogers distributed copies of the Access Cheshire brochure and the Access Cheshire catalog to Commissioners. This is a group of 5-week Summer classes for middle school students. There will be scholarships offered both merit and financial based to encourage stronger connections between surrounding communities and Cheshire Academy.

Mr. Rogers stated that he is a newly elected member of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and is excited to meet new people in the Community.
Chairman Miller asked about the breakdown of boarding students compared to day students at Cheshire Academy? Mr. Rogers replied that the mix is about 65 / 35 boarding to day students. Significant amongst the boarding students is the international population that is mostly Pan-Asian. Currently there are 360 students at Cheshire Academy, noting that they have been co-ed for approximately 40 years but only about 38% of the school population is girls. Cheshire Academy is looking to reach out to Europe and South America to expand its school population and diversity.

Cheshire Academy is looking to become an International Baccalaureate School. They will offer International Baccalaureate programs for Juniors and Seniors, if Cheshire Academy becomes certified in 3 years.

Mr. Hostage asked what languages are taught today at Cheshire Academy? Mr. Rogers replied Spanish, French and Mandarin at the High School level and Spanish, French and Latin at the Middle School level.

Cheshire Academy has 105 acres as its campus property.

Mr. Lesky asked about the Community Service projects that the Cheshire Academy students participate in? Mr. Rogers replied he is hoping to institute a bi-monthly Saturday program for the students next year that would pair the students with “students at risk” that are brought to the campus to work with them on reading, writing and arithmetic; perhaps spending some fun activity time together and as well as lunch on campus. This program is still in the planning process but Mr. Rogers is hopeful it will be in place next year.

Chairman Miller thanked Mr. Rogers for attending this morning’s Economic Development Commission meeting.

B) Meetings with Cheshire companies

Mr. Sitko stated that he will arrange for an Economist, hopefully Peter Goia, to be at the February 2010 Economic Development Commission meeting. Mr. Sitko commented that Commissioner Joan McDonald from the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development has accepted an invitation to attend the March 16th 2010 Cheshire Economic Development Commission meeting.

C) Pratt & Whitney

Mr. Sitko stated that the U.S. District Court in Bridgeport resumed the lawsuit to stop Pratt & Whitney’s move out of Connecticut on January 11th. Pratt & Whitney expects to have a decision around the end of the month. Currently the proposed closure will be in 2011 for the Cheshire Plant, with layoffs beginning this year. The current Union contract expires in December 2010. A few articles regarding this topic have been included in this meeting’s packet.
D) Focus Group Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that the Focus Group meeting for the growers and greenhouse operators is scheduled for January 28th from 7:30 a.m. until 9 a.m. Sheldon Dill will be the moderator of the meeting, again. Going forward, Mr. Sitko would like to have a rolling basis of meetings so that each month going forward some group is scheduled so that the Focus Group meetings can be rapped up.

Mr. Sitko added that the retailers / restaurants Focus Group meeting summary was distributed to the Commissioner members via e-mail late last week.

E) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvements Project Update

Mr. Sitko reported that the West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Subcommittee has a meeting scheduled for this Thursday at 8:30 a.m. to get an updated status report on the project. Mr. Pelletier and Ms. Campo are both members from the Economic Development Commission that sit on the West Main Street Subcommittee.

The plans are still with the Connecticut Department of Transportation awaiting their approval. Once the approval is received, this project can then send the first phase out to bid.

F) EDC Representative to Town Beautification Committee

Chairman Miller asked for anyone interested in representing the Economic Development Commission at the Town Beautification Committee to please notify himself or Mr. Sitko.

G) Meeting with CT DECD Commissioner Joan McDonald

Chairman Miller talked about State Commissioner Joan McDonald from the Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development recently accepted invitation to attend the March 16th 2010 Cheshire Economic Development Commission meeting to discuss the State’s Economic Strategic Plan.

Mr. Sitko talked about doing some pre-planning with a few Commissioners before the March meeting to prepare some questions in advance for Ms. McDonald. He added that if Peter Goia comes to the February Economic Development Commission meeting, he may be helpful in preparing some questions and discussion topics for Commissioner McDonald. Mr. DeJongh talked about reviewing notes from the recent Economic Forum held at Cheshire Academy for some addition suggestions. Chairman Miller suggested reviewing the Focus Group notes as well.
H) Incentive Committee

The current Incentive Policy runs through June 30th, 2011. Mr. Sitko stated that he has started to gather information from surrounding towns, with regards to their Incentive Policies.

I) Liaison Reports

Mr. Lesky, Liaison from the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, commented that the Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Meeting on January 14th at the Farms Country Club, where some new people were appointed to the Board of Directors. Mr. DeJongh added that it was a great event.

Mr. DeJongh, Liaison from the Inland Wetlands Commission, reported that they have been quiet.

Mr. Schrumm, Town Council Liaison, reported that the Community Pool enclosure options have been turned over to the Public Building Commission and will be reporting back in March to the Town Council. There is a meeting scheduled for this week with the Water Pollution Control Authority regarding a $35 million sewer upgrade with discussions to figure out financing options. The Operating Budget process has begun, the Town Council is looking at trying something new by figuring out what the potential tax increase will be and then working into that number.

J) Coordinator’s Report

Mr. Sitko stated that Goodrich Corporation recently completed its acquisition of Atlantic Inertial Systems, located on Knotter Drive. He will be working hard to retain the 400+ jobs here in Cheshire, currently with AIS.

The Commission is interested in pursuing the possibility of an Enterprise Zone designation by the State of Connecticut for the North end of Cheshire or a section of the north end. Mr. Sitko reported that this has been included for consideration as part of the Legislative package that has recently gone out from the Town.

Mr. Sitko noted that north of Jordan Caterer’s, in an I-2 zone, a self storage company is looking to possibly develop in that area.

Mr. Sitko reported that the UPS Store that was located in the Everybody’s plaza has recently closed.

The Town Council Ordinance Review Committee met a few weeks ago and discussed a noise ordinance proposal. Mr. Sitko was at the meeting and told the Committee members that it is not something that is easily enforced and would be bad for
Economic Development in Town. The topic was tabled by the Ordinance Review Committee.

Yankee Gas is working on an upgrade project that may begin this year following Route 68 from Wallingford, through Cheshire, to the LNG facility in Waterbury. Mr. Sitko noted that the Yankee Gas line project should be coordinated with the Streetscape and culvert work along West Main Street in the coming year or two.

Mr. Sitko commented that Business Appreciation Day is an important event to have this year, possibly in the Fall, in light of recent events and the economic struggles many are facing. He will be proposing the funding for the event in this coming year’s Operating Budget.

Articles regarding “Shop Wethersfield” were included in the meeting’s packet for Commissioners to review.

An article about the Profile of the Central Naugatuck Valley Region was included in this meeting’s packet.

K) Other

Chairman Miller commented that Consignment Originals appears to be doing a great job in its new location on South Main Street, as the parking lot is always full. In addition, he noted that the new Dollar store on South Main Street always seems to have a full parking lot as well. Commissioners commented that it is a true sign of the economic times and they were happy to see 2 local businesses doing well.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Pelletier to adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.; SECONDED by Mr. Scannell.

VOTE: In Favor – Campo, Gannon, Kaplan, Miller, Pelletier and Scannell
Opposed – None

The motion passed 6 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary