

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 18, 2019
7:30 a.m. – Room 210 – Town Hall

Commissioners Present:

David Pelletier, William Stanley, Derek Gromko, Don Dobbs, Dan O’Connell,

Absent:

Steve Sidoruk, Peter Nichols

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Guests: Glendowlyn Thames – Guest Speaker, Deputy Commissioner of the CT Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD), Yetta Augur and Mark Thomas, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Doug Johnson, Marion Manufacturing, Jane Pinho, ION Bank, and Cheshire Chamber, David Borowy, Town Council Liaison, David Veleber, Town Council.

VII. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was determined.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting – January 21, 2020

Mr. Gromko made a motion to accept minutes for regular meeting – January 21, 2020. Mr. O’Connell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

VII. Business

- a) Discussion with Glendowyn Thames – Deputy Commissioner of the CT Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD),

Glendowyn Thames is this month's guest speaker. Ms. Thames joined DECD in June 2019. In her role she has a wide range of oversight responsibilities and provides strategic direction for business development and workforce initiatives. Prior to DECD, Ms. Thames served as Founding Executive Director of CTNext, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Connecticut Innovations. There she managed economic development programs focused on fostering entrepreneurship, startup and growth-stage businesses and an innovative ecosystem on behalf of the State of Connecticut. While at Connecticut Innovations, Ms. Thames held leadership positions and oversaw vital innovation programs that support the state's small technology businesses and encourage collaboration and commercialization. She has over 15 years experience as a business, government, and non-profit leader managing high-priority projects and initiatives.

Ms. Thames discussed the rebranded Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), now called AdvanceCT, which is a partnership between public and private sectors to drive economic growth. She spoke about the Connecticut Economic Development Project and the roles of the steering committee and working team. The role of the steering committee is to provide project leadership and decision making authority. The role of the working team is to develop initiatives, design implementation, and provide input and strategic guidance. She noted that Connecticut's targeted industries are advanced manufacturing, insurance, financial services, bioscience and data services. These sectors need to be supported to build competitiveness and productivity.

Factors to improve economic enablers and drive competitiveness are workforce and talent, infrastructure, business climate and innovation. These areas are key to improving productivity and making decisions for business relocation and expansion.

Connecticut faces challenges including fiscal stability, affordability, workforce readiness, and ease of doing business. The "draft" strategy to promote economic growth has a goal for the state to be a leader for growth and jobs by 2025. In addition, Connecticut will build on five pillars for achievement of goals with initiatives for each: workforce, innovation, cities and towns, infrastructure,

and business environment. Achievements will be shared by partnering with public, private, academic and social sectors.

Ms. Thames will remember Cheshire in strategies going forward and will continue to communicate on these initiatives. She took a number of questions from the meeting attendees and closed by thanking the EDC for its invitation.

b) Speakers for Future Meetings

A representative from Hartford Healthcare will be invited to speak at the meeting in March. Others to be invited as future speakers are Garnett Sheehan and Anne Benowitz of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce.

Please contact Mr. Sitko with suggestions for future guest speakers.

c) Incentive Policy

A meeting to review the incentive policy is scheduled on Tuesday, March 3 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 210 of the town hall. Commissioners Stanley, Gromko, and Dobbs will serve on the committee.

d) Grand List

An email dated January 29, 2020 from Sean Kimball announced an increase of 1.52% which is almost twice the recent historical average of around 0.75% in non-revaluation years. The bulk of the increase was driven by new real estate growth. The increase represents healthy grand list growth reflecting investments made by local businesses, new home construction, vehicle purchases and recent economic development efforts.

e) Liaison Reports

The Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Legislative Breakfast on Friday, January 24, 2020 was well attended and a successful event.

Yetta Augur said that Connecticut Business Day is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4th at 7:30 a.m. with a check-in & networking breakfast followed by a program from 9:00 a.m. – Noon. The event will be held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

Mark Thomas said that Home Health & Garden Show is scheduled on March 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Cheshire High School. He also said that a communication plan is being developed to better notify local businesses of activities involving state government. A poll is being developed and will be sent to businesses to learn what is affecting them based on environment, government and other areas.

f) Coordinator's Report

- Counter Weight Brewing Company based in Hamden has announced its intent to relocate to Cheshire.
- Constitution Surgery Alliance has received approval for incentive assistance from the town council for a 75,000 square foot building at 759 West Johnson Avenue. It is currently meeting with the IWWC and Planning and Zoning Commission.
- NW Quadrant of Interchange Zone – work continues with the CT DOT on state-owned land in the NW quadrant of the Interchange Zone. DOT is working on reconciling what it owns. The town's engineering department and Mr. Sitko are assisting by providing information gathered from town records.
- Collins Aerospace and BAE – BAE Systems, Inc. will be purchasing Collins Aerospace to clear the way for the merger of United Technologies Corporation, parent company of Collins Aerospace, and Raytheon. Plans to combine operations were announced in June 2019.
- Information provided by Commissioner Dobbs for the EDC is attached in today's meeting packet.
- Former Councilman Paul Bowman has resigned from the Town Council.
- IWWC Chairman Bob deJongh has resigned from the IWWC and is moving to North Carolina.
- Cheshire chamber's legislative agenda is attached.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Dawn Guite, Recording Secretary, EDC