



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING DATES
2021**

The Commission meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 a.m. in Room 207/209 at the Town Hall, 84 South Main Street, unless otherwise noted.

January 19, 2021

February 16, 2021

March 16, 2021

April 20, 2021

May 18, 2021

June 15, 2021

July 20, 2021

August 17, 2021

September 21, 2021

October 19, 2021

November 16, 2021

December 21, 2021

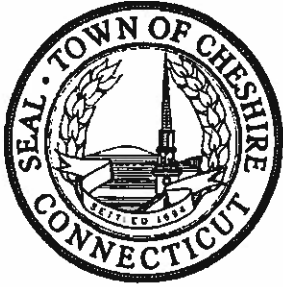
January 18, 2022

(Chairman)

(Date)

*The Meeting Dates and room location are subject to change. Please call the Planning Department at 203-271-6670 for confirmation.





**MEMORANDUM
TOWN OF CHESHIRE**

84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT 06410
(203) 271-6670 Telephone (203) 271-6688 FAX

The Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut

DATE: December 9, 2020

TO: Economic Development Commission

**FROM: Jerry Sitko
Economic Development Coordinator**

SUBJECT: Cox Communications

Councilman Peter Talbot, who is employed by Cox Communications, will attend the commission's meeting to discuss reduced internet speed experienced by Cheshire residents and businesses since the beginning of the pandemic. Mr. Talbot will discuss what his company has learned relative to the increased demands on the system and what adjustments they have made or plan to make to address future capacity.

Thank you.



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TOWN OF CHESHIRE**

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(203) 271-6670 Telephone (203) 271-6688 FAX

The Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut

DATE: December 9, 2020

TO: Economic Development Commission

**FROM: Jerry Sitko
Economic Development Coordinator**

SUBJECT: Speakers for Future Meetings

As we continue to undertake and plan activities to help small businesses affected by the pandemic, I think it might be worthwhile for the commission to hear directly from a few of them at its next meeting. Hopefully, the discussion will lead to additional ideas that we could implement to support our business community. Accordingly, I suggest inviting a small business and restaurant owner to the next meeting. Chairman Stanley and I look forward to your suggestions about which business and restaurant owners to invite.

Thank you.



**MEMORANDUM
TOWN OF CHESHIRE**

84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT 06410
(203) 271-6670 Telephone (203) 271-6688 FAX

The Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut

DATE: December 9, 2020

TO: Economic Development Commission

FROM: Jerry Sitko

SUBJECT: Open for Business Activities

A number of activities have occurred or are in progress or planned to support Cheshire businesses and restaurants:

- **Eight videos** were produced by Bozzuto's Media. The first is an introductory piece urging Cheshire residents to *Shop Local* and emphasizing that it's safe to do so. A variety of businesses (Olive & Henry, Cappola-Brokaw Art of Hair, YMCA, Paws, Red Owl, Vespucci's and 129 On Main Salon & Spa) are featured in seven videos. The roll out of this campaign started on November 4 and continued through November 23. The videos have been posted on the town's website and Twitter and Facebook sites. The Cheshire Chamber of Commerce has also posted them on its social media sites.
- **Shop Local and Eat Local** signs were made and distributed to small businesses and restaurants before Small Business Saturday which was November 28.
- **\$50.00 VISA gift cards.** In another effort to help our restaurants, residents who spent \$25.00 or more at a restaurant or eatery and sent their receipts to the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce were eligible to win one of four \$50.00 VISA gift cards. \$1,827 in receipts were accepted through November 29. The winning receipts were drawn on December 1.
- Needless to say, this has been an extremely difficult year for many people and businesses. In the spirit of doing something positive and uplifting as we approach the end of 2020, businesses and residents have been encouraged to **Light Up** their windows/properties during the holiday season.

Thank you.

The Cheshire T.

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No. 45 20 PAGES

CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT

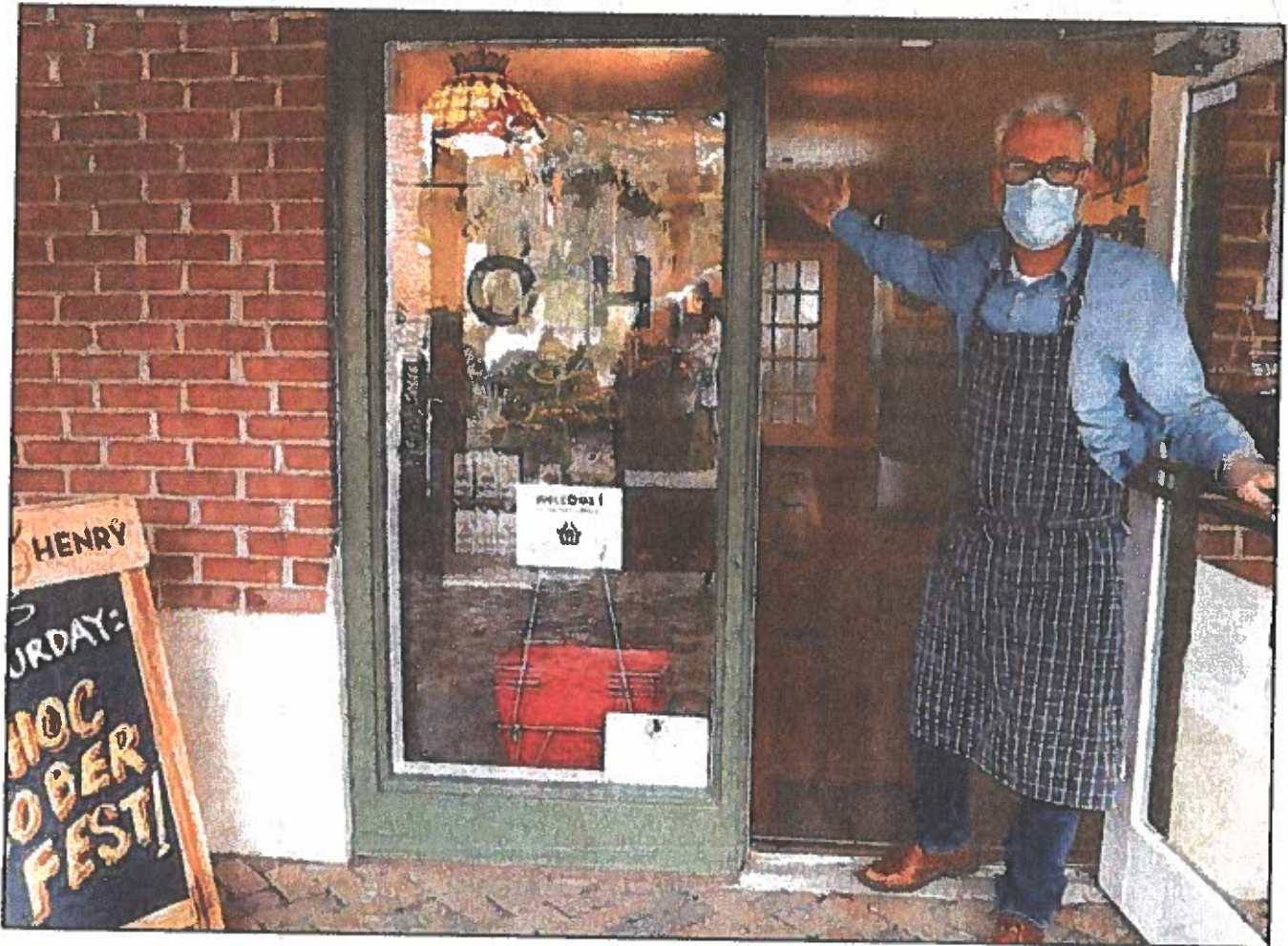


Photo courtesy of the Town of Cheshire
Olive & Henry owner Chris Dircks welcomes all to Olive & Henry Fine Foods in the opening scene of a video produced by the Town of Cheshire and Chamber of Commerce.

“Shop Local” Takes On More Importance As Pandemic Continues

by Mariah Melendez
Herald Staff

With the holiday season officially here, the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce is making an effort to focus on local businesses and restaurants in town, to help them get back on their feet during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have been collaborating very closely with Jerry (Sitko, Cheshire economic development coordinator) and the Economic Development Commission on how to get our local businesses back up and running,” said Yetta Augur, the president of the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce. “Our mission right

now is to get residents to shop and eat locally. We want everyone to know that Cheshire is open for business.”

In an effort to get the word out, Sitko and the Economic Development Commission purchased “eat local” and “shop local” signs, which they have positioned throughout town to encourage resi-

dents to utilize the small businesses for which Cheshire has been known.

“We also did a video series where we chose businesses, at random, and did a video feature about the business and how it fits into the community,” Augur added. “They were a huge hit!”

See NOVEMBER, page 6

The

November Gift Card Program Encouraged Residents To Eat Local

Continued from page one

The videos, which are featured on the Town of Cheshire website, highlighted seven small businesses — Cappola-Brokaw Art of Hair, Vespucci's Restaurant, Olive & Henry Fine Foods, Paws Pet Resort & Spa, YMCA, The Red Owl, and 129 On Main Salon & Spa. Each video is approximately 1–3 minutes long, and gives the viewer some idea of what products and services are offered by each of the establishments, as well as a bit of

background on each.

"The videos were put on with the help of Bozzuto's Media, which was a great resource," said Sitko. "If you do something, you want it to be done well. That's exactly what we got with the videos"

While there are no current plans to continue the series, Sitko wants to keep his options open, and mentioned that the videos have gotten a great deal of attention, even from state officials.

The videos are just the first of many ideas Sitko and Augur have planned for local

businesses.

In November, the Chamber ran a program encouraging those who ate at a local restaurant to submit their receipts, which were then put into a hat from which four winners were drawn on Dec. 1. Each of those selected received a \$50 gift card.

For December, the Chamber is sponsoring Light up Cheshire, where businesses are encouraged to decorate their storefronts and then submit a photo.

State businesses have been operating under restrictions

since mid-March, when the state began to shut down due to the rise of COVID-19 cases and subsequent hospitalizations. In May, Connecticut began its phased-in approach to reopening the state, and moved from Phase One to Phase Two in June.

The original plan was for the state to move to Phase Three in July, but Gov. Lamont decided to delay that until October. Recently, however, the state, along with the rest of the country and the world, has seen an uptick in cases and hospitalizations associat-

ed with the virus, and Gov. Lamont ordered the state back to what is being called Phase 2.1.

The biggest concern for both Augur and Sitko is keeping Cheshire businesses afloat, especially during the holiday season, normally a busy time for retailers.

"Yetta and I have met practically every day since the shutdown," added Sitko. "Our businesses are really getting creative with how they do business, and they are really putting an emphasis on safety first."

Ultimately, supporting small businesses is vital to Cheshire's economic growth. Sitko has made it clear that supporting the local businesses in town means much more than one might think.

"You can shop anywhere you want. If you want to shop online, go for it. But it's the small businesses here that make Cheshire Cheshire. Small businesses support your kids lacrosse teams, theater productions, and all the things that make Cheshire a great place to live," he concluded.

Shop

From A1

is likely to be more important than in year's past, in light of COVID and its deleterious impact on businesses. Chamber of Commerce President Yetta Augur and Jerry Sitko, Cheshire Economic Development Coordinator collaborated on ideas to help the local business community. The outcome was a series of videos, "Cheshire is Open for Business."

The goal was to remind citizens that despite the pandemic, residents could support local businesses safely, said Sitko. "We also wanted to urge everyone to support their small businesses, many of which have been struggling," he said.

"Cheshire would not be the town it is if it were not for its small businesses," Sitko emphasized time and again. It's the small businesses who provide support for community events, programs, sports leagues and charitable causes, he said.

Sitko contacted Clem Kasinskas with Bozzuto's Media to

get the project off the ground. "He's a good guy and a virtuoso with the camera," said Sitko of Kasinskas. What followed was a series of professionally produced videos highlighting various Cheshire small businesses. The videos can be seen on the town's website, cheshirect.org and feature Olive & Henry's, Vespucci's Restaurant, Coppola-Brokaw Art of Hair, PAWS Resort and Spa and The Red Owl Jewelry and Gift Shop.

Laurie Acosta's The Red Owl has done a lot of creative marketing during COVID, which had the store shut down from March until June. She found her niche with social media, including weekly Facebook Live Watch Party events. "I needed a way to reconnect and keep things going," Acosta explained. Social media, curbside pick-up and online orders were all used. The Red Owl recently hosted a live Holiday Open House on Facebook, complete with Tracey the elf decorating the Christmas tree, and a tour of the shop's latest arrivals.

"It's a nice way to show everybody what is new and

what is coming in," said Acosta. The number of Watch Party customers totaled well over one hundred.

Black Friday and the Small Business Saturday promotions include extended shopping hours and will feature amazing deals on some of our favorite brands and items, said Acosta. For instance, The Red Owl will offer a free thank you gift with any online or instore purchase.

"Our deals will run for five days to allow time and space for customers to shop," Acosta said.

Cheshire resident, Deb DeMeo, has also been thinking out-of-the-box during COVID in order to keep her business going. DeMeo is the owner of Jazzercise, Hamden Fitness Studio. It shut down in March.

"The online classes have essentially saved my business for the time being," said DeMeo. Six people are allowed in class with 12-foot spacing as required by the state, DeMeo said. People are not necessarily comfortable coming to in-person classes, so the ability to come to their living rooms is huge, DeMeo said. Most classes are done

via Facebook with privacy protocols and other online platforms are being developed, she said. People are excited to get back to exercise, said DeMeo, with a selection of low-impact, cardio and strength formats in the offerings. The online classes have allowed her to bring back some of her instructors, too.

On Small Business Saturday, DeMeo will offer a "try before you buy" \$20 for the rest

of 2020 deal. "This way you can try something out before you make a commitment.

For long-time Cheshire photographer, Rick Ciaburri, his action plan includes this statement: "We are sanitized, ventilated, masked and ready for your family portrait."

Ciaburri will offer discounts on family portraits, with a first 12 greeting cards free offer.

Shop Local kicks into high gear for the holidays

*By Joy VanderLek
The Cheshire Citizen*

Cheshire is open for business. It's the rallying cry of local businesses as Shop Local, Small Business Saturday lays out the welcome mat the weekend of Nov. 28 and 29. The promotion was created by American Express in 2010 as tool for small businesses to get recognition and gain traction in their communities. The following year, the movement went national. According to the Small

Business Administration, there are more than 28 million small businesses throughout the country.

This year's Shop Local event

See Shop, **A3**

Staff member and part-time elf Tracy Wilson plays Santa's Helper during The Red Owl's recent virtual Holiday Open House.

Photo courtesy of Nelson Acosta

Now, More Than Ever ... Shop Local

When the pandemic first hit back in March, the need to support local businesses seemed obvious.

Never before had so many establishments been forced, by state government regulations, to either limit their services or close their doors outright. Never before had so many had their futures thrown into such immediate limbo, with little idea as to when or how they would survive the uncertainty of the moment.

So when word came, via the Cheshire Chamber and the Town, that small businesses were in need of help, the community rallied. People began ordering online and taking advantage of curbside pickup, something that quickly became a part of our "new normal." Restaurants saw an uptick in takeout. Everyone truly was "in it together."

We are nine months into this pandemic now. We've gone from St. Patrick's Day to Thanksgiving living under the cloud of COVID-19. And the need to support local businesses has only increased.

As *The Herald* reports this week, the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and the Town's Economic Development Commission have been hard at work trying to promote "buy local." It's a phrase we've heard a lot over the last few years, but it's taken on even more significance this year.

Connecticut began a phased-in reopening plan back in the spring and had determined to continue it through the summer, fall, and winter. But as we sit here today, the state is only in Phase 2 of that plan. Considering the third phase had originally been set to begin on July 21, you understand how radically things can change.

With a new outbreak of COVID-19 arriving for the fall and holiday season, Gov. Ned Lamont and public health officials have tightened mitigation protocols to try and stop the spread. At a time when many business owners had hoped to be getting back to some semblance of normalcy, they find the world looking incredibly unpredictable.

And as we approach the holidays, some may be wondering how they'll survive past the first of the new year.

That's where the community comes in.

We are 22 days away from Christmas. Hanukkah begins next week. Gift shopping has already begun. If you want to help out, make sure you're looking to local shops, retailers, and restaurants for your holiday needs this year. Most, if not all, offer the convenience of online shopping, and those who do not have put the time, effort, and energy into ensuring that your in-store experience is as safe as possible.

If there was ever a time to truly shop local, it's now. Cheshire, on average, has done better than other communities, many of which have seen local staples — family-run establishments that spanned decades in one location — closing up for good. New businesses have folded, or never gotten off the ground at all.

Locally, things seem somewhat stable, but times are most definitely not. Without some community help, it won't be long before a few Cheshire favorites end up victims of this terrible public health crisis.

Of course, it isn't just businesses who find themselves feeling the crunch. All of us have felt the impact of this illness in our lives, whether our personal health has been affected or not. Many may be cutting back on the holiday gift-giving at the moment.

But shoppers will shop. And if you're still planning to have gifts under the tree this year, try and make sure a few are from the local establishments that do so much to help the community. It's the small business owners who sponsor athletic teams, hold fundraisers for school clubs, and throw their support behind so many of the causes that members of the town hold most dear.

They need your help. They needed it in April. They need it again today. They'll need it next year.



The Cheshire Herald accepts all letters. Phone numbers and email address are requested to keep letters to approximately 300 words. You can submit letters to www.cheshireherald.com, by email to ne@cheshireherald.com, or by mail to The Cheshire Herald, 195 South Main St., Cheshire, CT 06024.



Volunteers Help Make Sustainable

Editor, *The Cheshire Herald*:

Back in July, we at the Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire began meeting with a group of local volunteers from diverse organizations who were interested in promoting sustainability in our community.

These volunteers together organized our town's inaugural fundraiser with Sustainable CT's matching grant program. The Cheshire Compost Task Force, as these volunteers came to be known, created the "Seeding Backyard Composting" campaign,

developing promotional and educational materials about the value of diverting food waste from our landfills and encouraging backyard composting. Food waste represents an estimated 21-22% of our waste stream, which when sent to landfills releases into the atmosphere dangerous amounts of methane, a greenhouse gas significantly more powerful than carbon dioxide. As a result of the Cheshire Compost Task Force's tireless efforts, we were able to raise enough funds to purchase 82 composters for Cheshire residents and comm Bartlem Garden, Farms, Fi Church, at copal Chu We he Cheshire Force mer Marj Chap lis, Anne Loehmann Merz, Ann linn Parrin and Gene their fear Roach. A health cr COVID-15

SUPPORT YOUR CHESHIRE BUSINESSES

**SHOP
LOCAL**

**Cheshire Economic Development Commission
and Chamber of Commerce**

SUPPORT YOUR CHESHIRE RESTAURANTS

**EAT
LOCAL**

**Cheshire Economic Development Commission
and Chamber of Commerce**



CHESHIRE
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

The Economic Development Commission
& the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
are collaborating again to support
our restaurants and eateries!



Chance to win one of four, \$50 Visa gift cards!

Support one of our local restaurants or eateries spend \$25.00 or more,
and send in your receipt with contact info by email to yetta@cheshirechamber.org
OR mail to Cheshire Chamber 195 South Main St. to be entered to win.

We will accept receipts
Oct 23rd thru November 29th

SUPPORT LOCAL

Winners will be drawn and
announced on December 1st

The Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
& The Cheshire Economic
Development Commission
Invite you to

Light up Cheshire!

Help us light up our town for the holiday season
and the early months of winter.

This has been a difficult year for
our small businesses.

Let's use this opportunity to

“Shine a Light”

on our businesses and lift the
spirits of our community

Please email Yetta@cheshirechamber.org
To let us know who will participate



**MEMORANDUM
TOWN OF CHESHIRE**

84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT 06410
(203) 271-6670 Telephone (203) 271-6688 FAX

The Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut

DATE: December 10, 2020

TO: Economic Development Commission

FROM: Jerry Sitko 

SUBJECT: Coordinator's Report

At Tuesday's meeting, I will report to the commission on several topics, including:

- Ball & Socket Arts
- "Bovano" Property
- ReRead Books
- Bozzuto's
- K.I.S.S. Café / Anthony's Restaurant
- Memorandum of Understanding with Regional Water Authority
- COVID Rapid Testing Unit at South Main CVS
- Naugatuck Valley Regional Profile 2020
- Blight Ordinance
- State-Owned Land in Interchange Zone

Thank you.

Books Of All Genres Will Be Available To Customers At ReRead

Continued from page two

to be contributing members of the community.”

According to the store’s website, the idea came to fruition after a group of parents, caregivers, educators and community leaders began noticing that young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities were losing their jobs en masse due to COVID-19. The pandemic has caused many employers to downsize or shut down altogether, leaving hundreds of employees unable to find appropriate work, especially those who have a disability.

“We have been collecting books from the community for a while now and the support is overwhelming,” said Reinhard.

“Cheshire has such a giving heart.”

The store is funded by a group called the Connecticut Community Empowerment Foundation (CCEF), which was formed to “raise awareness within the community to advance acceptance of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to create integrated employment opportunities,” according to their website.

The store aims to carry books of all genres, including children’s books, mystery, fiction and non-fiction, history, and romance.

Planning and Zoning Chair Earl Kurtz III voiced his support for the store, noting that it seemed like “a worthy cause.” The plans were passed unanimously by the Commissioners.

The store opened its doors for the first time on Saturday, Nov. 7, and employee Andrea Costello was excited to get back to work.

“I am excited to start working

again and meet the people of Cheshire,” Costello added. “I have started to meet some people as they drop off books!”

If you would like to donate

books to ReRead Books & More, contact Hope Reinhard at hope@reread-books.org. To learn more about the store visit www.reread-books.org/.

ReRead Bookstore Offering Different Kind Of Experience

by **Mariah Melendez**
Herald Staff

A brand-new business has arrived at the Cheshire Watch Factory Shoppes, one that hopes to give back to the community twofold — by hiring and training some of the town’s most at need residents, and selling used books donated by locals.

On Oct. 14, the Planning and Zoning Commission officially began reviewing plans for the new business — a retail training facility and used bookstore called ReRead Books & More. The store is located at 104 Elm St. and owned by Hope Reinhard.

“We are renting out two spaces on the lower level of the Watch Factory Shoppes ... what we will be doing is hiring and training kids in our community that have special needs to work in a retail situation,” Reinhard explained. “We will be selling used books and some crafts that the kids will be making.”

ReRead Books & More already had employees who were ready and willing to work even before the store opened, despite the challenges COVID-19 has caused them.

“We began noticing in the summer that these young adults were losing their jobs — paying jobs — because of the pandemic,” explained Barbara Costello, parent of ReRead Books employee, Andrea. “These students want to work and are ready and willing

See BOOKS, page 9

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ("MOU") dated this ____ of ___, 2020, memorializes the agreement made by and between South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority ("RWA"), a public corporation and political subdivision of the State of Connecticut having a principal place of business at 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT 06511 and the Town of Cheshire, a municipal corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut having a principal place of business at 84 South Main Street, Cheshire, CT 06410 (the "Town"). From time to time throughout this MOU, each of RWA and the Town is referred to as a "Party," and collectively as the "Parties."

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, Stone Bridge Crossing ("SBC") development was approved by the Town Planning and Zoning Commission on (date) which development consists of a 105-acre mixed use development in the Town near the interchange of Routes 10 and I-691 (the "Development") within the District;

WHEREAS, the Development is located within the Exclusive Service Area (ESA) of the RWA;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the ESA, pursuant to a separate Memorandum of Understanding and an agreement dated ___ 1927 between the RWA and the Southington Water District ("SWD") water service to the Development shall be provided by SWD;

WHEREAS, RWA may elect to assume ownership of the water main to the Development at which time SWD will no longer provide water to the Development;

WHEREAS, the RWA makes payments in lieu of taxes ("PILOT") to the Town which payments made by the RWA as a substitute for property taxes;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of these premises, the Parties enter into this MOU to evidence the following general agreement:

SECTION 1. PILOT: The Town agrees to waive for a period of five years the PILOT associated with the water mains as shown on the subdivision plans for the Development at such time as the RWA elects to assume ownership of the mains installed by SWD for the Development. The estimated value of the waiver of this PILOT is \$175,000. Additionally, the Town agrees to a fifty percent (50%) reduction of the PILOT associated with the water mains along Route 10 and the loop on west side of the Development connecting at Dickerman Road for a period of five years. The estimated value of the waiver of this PILOT is \$108,000. This item is contingent upon the development of the State owned property on the east side of Route 10 across from the subdivision.

SECTION 2. MISCELLANEOUS TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The following are comprehensive provisions in conjunction with the aforementioned Sections and Exhibits presented in this MOU:

- (a) This MOU shall be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of the State of Connecticut.
- (b) This MOU may not be recorded.
- (c) No Party to this MOU is empowered to alter or amend any term herein unless such alteration or amendment is in writing and has been signed by both Parties. This provision cannot be orally waived.
- (d) The individuals who have executed this MOU on behalf of the respective Parties expressly represent and warrant that they are authorized to sign on behalf of such Parties for the purpose of duly binding such Parties to this MOU.
- (e) This MOU may be executed in several counterparts, each of which, when so executed and delivered shall be an original, but all of which together shall constitute but one and the same instrument.
- (f) The terms and provisions of this MOU embody the Parties' mutual intent and shall not be construed more liberally in favor of, nor more strictly against, either Party and, particularly, shall not be construed more strictly against the Party which has drafted this MOU.
- (g) Nothing contained in this MOU shall be construed to create any association, trust, partnership, or joint venture or impose a trust or partnership, duty, obligation, or liability or any agency relationship on, or with regard to, either Party. Neither Party hereto shall have the right to bind or obligate the other in any way or manner.

Signature Pages to Follow

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, South Central Regional Water Authority has executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date set forth below:

1st Witness: South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority

NAME By:_____

2nd WITNESS: _____
NAME

NAME TITLE

DATE

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)

COUNTY OF NEW HAVEN)

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this ____ day of _____, 2020 before me, _____, the undersigned officer, personally appeared _____, who acknowledged himself to be the _____ of South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, and as such _____, being authorized so to do, executed the foregoing instrument for the purposes therein contained by signing the name of the corporation by himself as such _____.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

[Notarial Seal]

Notary Public/Commissioner of the Superior Court

My commission expires: _____

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Town of Cheshire has executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date set forth below:

1st Witness: Town of Cheshire

NAME _____ By: _____

2nd WITNESS: NAME _____

NAME _____ TITLE _____

DATE _____

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)

COUNTY OF _____)

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this ____ day of _____, 2020 before me, _____, the undersigned officer, personally appeared _____, who acknowledged himself/herself to be the _____ of The Town of Cheshire, and as such _____, being authorized so to do, executed the foregoing instrument for the purposes therein contained by signing the name of the corporation by himself/herself as such _____.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

Notary Public/Commissioner of the Superior Court

[Notarial Seal]

My commission expires: _____

Exhibits

Unless I'm just missing it, the PILOT waiver should say it is for a 5 year period in both instances.

Council Likely To Consider New Blight Ordinance For Cheshire

by Mariah Melendez
Herald Staff

Dilapidated and decrepit buildings in town have been a source of contention for many residents over the years.

To address that, the Town Council passed the Unsafe Premises Ordinance in 2018 to deal with the issue. But now the Council could be ready to take it one step further.

The Unsafe Premises Ordi-

nance was originally adopted by the Council with a sunset period extending to 2019. Last year, the Council voted to extend the ordinance through 2020, and extended it again this fall through 2021, allowing for Councilors to consider full adoption of the ordinance along with the possibility of adding a blight ordinance to the mix.

In October, the Cheshire Town Council held a public hearing regarding the Unsafe Premises Ordinance. Councilor David Veleber, a supporter of the ordinance, explained its brief history in town and what it has been used for in the past.

"The ordinance has been an important tool for the Fire Marshal, Human Services Department, and other Town departments to assist residents with premises issues and any unsafe conditions on the premises,"

"The issue really isn't whether or not we should have a blight ordinance, but rather how we incorporate it."

-Councilor Dave Veleber

Veleber explained.

The ordinance can apply to any town property that may be considered unsafe due to neglect. In Cheshire's case, the Fire Chief Jack Casner is the individual who enforces any Unsafe Premises issues.

The ordinance does not cover properties that are structurally sound but may require superficial maintenance or additional yard work, such as lawn mowing.

"It has come to our attention as a Council that there are numerous residences in town (where) it is clear that the property owners have not taken care of their properties," Veleber told *The Herald*.

"These properties are affecting the property value of the surrounding neighbors, and some people just don't want to look at the mess."

Veleber, who is the chair of the Ordinance Committee, told *The Herald* that the committee is interested in recommending a blight ordinance, but needs to decide whether the ordinance should be added onto the existing Unsafe Premises Ordinance, or established as a separate one.

"The issue really isn't whether or not we should have a blight ordinance, but rather how we incorporate it," Veleber explained.

See VELEBER, page 4

Veleber Expects Committee To Recommend Ordinance

Continued from page three

“There is no real drawback to having a separate ordinance, and it would likely be clearer and easier to follow if it was separate, but that’s something the Ordinance Committee has to consider.”

At an Oct. 13 meeting of the Council, Assistant Town Manager Arnett Talbot read a letter into the record from resident and former Town Council member Bonnie DiMauro, regarding the current ordinance and the need for an additional blight ordinance.

“I am in favor of extending the Unsafe Premises Ordinance. In fact, I don’t see why this has not been made a permanent ordinance,” the letter states. “However, of equal or more importance, I

believe we need a generalized blight ordinance for our town. In 2017, this was discussed because of a hoarding case, but the ordinance was scaled back to simply address structural safety and health issues.”

The letter goes on to identify numerous properties in Cheshire that DiMauro believes have been “unkempt and unsightly.” DiMauro’s letter also brought up an issue with a property on Highland Avenue, which she tried to address when she was on the Council in 2000 and hopes to address once

again.

“Ironically, the property is right at the edge of our Historic District. When I moved here in 1975, the property was a mess, and to this day no improvements have been made,” wrote DiMauro.

DiMauro did not specify what property she was referring to in her letter.

While Veleber did state that a decision would not be ready to present by the next Town Council meeting, he did say a decision would be made “soon.”