

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, December 15, 2020
4:30 P.M.**

VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (ZOOM)
(PER EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT)

Commissioners Present:

William Stanley, Derek Gromko, Don Dobbs, Dan O'Connell, David Pelletier,
Steve Sidoruk, Peter Nichols

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator, Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town
Manager

Guests: Peter Talbot, Town Councilman - Cox Communications

Yetta Augur, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, David Borowy, Town Council Liaison

VII. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Stanley called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.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 – October 20, 2020

Mr. O'Connell made a motion to accept minutes for regular meeting –

October 20, 2020. Mr. Nichols seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI. APPROVAL OF 2021 MEETING DATES

Mr. Nichols made a motion to approve the 2021 Meeting Dates for the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Gromko seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS

VIII. BUSINESS

- a) Discussion with Cox Communications – Peter Talbot, Town Councilman and Cox Representative

A discussion took place about the challenges of the pandemic for Cox Communications, local businesses, and residences. Times are unprecedented. Mr. Talbot said that there has been an increase of 80% resulting from the pandemic where business and schooling is conducted from home. He said that an increase of this proportion normally takes a three year timeframe to be realized. To service the increase, nodes with the same bandwidth have been split with a quantity of 90 thus far to support businesses and residences. This work is being done physically by Cox crew members. An additional 300 are projected for the year 2021. The three franchises of Cox Communications in Meriden, Manchester and Enfield have all seen the 80% increase.

The "Connect to Compete" education product, part of the Cares Act, where data is available for streaming and home schooling, is paid for by the State of Connecticut. Cox Communications eliminated the data cap from April through June and reinstated it in July. There has been a percentage decrease with the return of in-school learning.

Mr. Talbot said that security, consumer costs and capacity are not jeopardized based on the increase.

- b) Speakers for Future Meetings

There was a discussion to invite several local businesses to future meetings including a restaurant/cafe.

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

c) Open for Business Activities

Yetta Augur and Jerry Sitko developed ideas to encourage Cheshire residents to support local businesses.

Key initiatives are:

- **8 Videos of businesses** showing modifications made to keep patrons safe. Clem Kasinkas, videographer at Bozzutto's, filmed at Olive & Harry, Cappola-Brokaw Art of Hair, Main Street Café, 129 on Main Salon and Spa, Paws, Red Owl, Vespucci's and the YMCA on October 22 and 26. Videos are being run on the town and chamber's websites and social media.
- **Shop Local and Eat Local** signs were placed at small businesses and restaurants in town before Small Business Saturday on November 28th.
- **\$50.00 VISA gift cards** campaign ran at Cheshire restaurants from October 23rd through November 29th. Residents who spent \$25.00 or more and submitted their receipts were eligible to win one of four \$50.00 VISA gift cards. \$1,827 in receipts were collected until November 29th.
- **Small Business Saturday** is on November 28. Signs will be located in front of businesses on Route 10 and throughout town to encourage residents to Shop Cheshire during the holidays.
- **Light Up Cheshire** will run through the holiday season to bring positivity and uplift to town. It began on Thanksgiving weekend. Businesses are encouraged to light up their windows during the holiday season.

d) Liaison Reports

David Bowery, Town Council Liaison, said that the videos of the businesses were well received by Council members. The “feel good” measures are bringing positivity to town.

Yetta Augur, from the Chamber of Commerce, said that surveys sent for feedback about the videos reflected answers of how people in town are feeling and the “feel good” efforts being made. The Chamber will continue with this focus.

e) Coordinator’s Report

- Ball and Socket Arts - The first remediation is completed and another application will be submitted for additional funding. A pre-application for Phase 2 remediation has been approved and estimates are coming in.
- Bovano Property – There is interest being shown by an adult beverage company.
- ReRead Books – An outlet providing employment opportunities to young adults with special needs, has opened in the Watch Factory building. The outlet is operated by the Connecticut Community Empowerment Foundation and occupies a 1,600 square foot store front area on the first level.
- Bozzutto's – There may be expansion taking place in the future.
- K.I.S.S. Café/Anthony’s Restaurant – K.I.S.S. Café is no longer operating and Anthony’s Restaurant will be taking over the site. Anthony’s plans on opening in the spring seven days per week.
- Regional Water Authority Memorandum of Understanding – The Regional Water Authority is in a deal to extend service to the north end of Cheshire based on conditions involving expansion across the highway, state-owned land, and installation of new piping. The Town of Southington will eventually become involved.
- Covid Rapid Testing Unit at South Main Street CVS – The Rapid Testing Unit will conduct tests within a 10 minute turnaround time.
- Naugatuck Valley Regional Profile 2020 – Shows steady job growth year over year with approximately 16,800 jobs.

- Dragon Buffet Property – There are plans for the property to become a major beverage company.

Mr. Stanley wished Catherine Donegan a happy retirement and thanked her for her years of service to the town and support shown to the EDC.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Stanley adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dawn Guite". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "t".

Dawn Guite, Recording Secretary, EDC