



CHESTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes- DRAFT

December 12, 2022 at 3:30PM
Location: Chester Town Office Meeting Room

1. Call to Order / Roll Call:

Meeting called to order at 3:32 by Chairman Jon Joslow. Commission members Pat Bandzes and Carlie Dailey, and First Selectwoman Charlene Janacek in attendance. Audience of citizens: Rebecca Mead and Linda Carlson.

2. Approval of 11/2/22 draft minutes:

Pat provided a grammatical edit

3. Master Plan for Public Facilities/Convenience (Jon):

“Vote to approve contact with boards and commissions to determine support to proceed with a coordinated (“d” added) approach.”

Motion to approve 11/2/22 minutes as amended: Motion and Second by Carlie and Pat, respectively. Motion carried.

3. Recent Commercial Listings and Transactions combined with

4. Progress on existing Town Initiatives:

47 Middlesex Ave (St. Josephs Parish Center)

Charlene reported that the Norwich Diocese will announce the parish center sale within the next two weeks. 40 units of affordable housing developed by Honeycomb/Vesta. Chester’s Affordable Housing Plan enabled the state of CT to fast-tracking the associated approvals under State Statue 8-30g (Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure).

56 Middlesex (Organon)

Grocery/prepared foods/deli store to open by Jan 1 2023.

212 Middlesex Ave (Ted Tine Motorsports)

Property sold last week at auction.

33 Liberty Street / MS Brooks Factory

Buyer informed Charlene that he is buying the property.



Goodspeed at Chester

Negotiations between Goodspeed and Caryn's team continuing.

59 Winthrop Road (Skyview)

Evaluation is 68% complete—no remediation.

Inspiration Lane (new)

#2 Inspiration Lane is vacant land- for sale, sqft unknown. Office, distribution, high tech zone.

#4 Inspiration Lane off market

Ideal assignment for a town planner or an EDC member to volunteer to assemble the property owners around the industrial park and have them share information about potential development.

Cell Reception across Chester- Cell Towers

Charlene trying to get someone to conduct a survey. Sent Ray 4 new sites

Boardwalk from North Quarter Park to the Cemetery Road

A neighbor behind School House Lane is upset about people walking on a proposed path behind her house. Charlene reminded her that the land in question is town owned and it can be accessible to the public. The path might be either boardwalk or a foot path. That area is considered wetlands.

East Haddam Ped/Bike Path Spur

Pat and Cindy Lignar met with National Park Service, Landmark, East Haddam officials on December 8 at a public meeting on the Heritage Trail. East Haddam to meet with Town of Haddam later this week to discuss the project. Chester's road safety audit (RSA) not expected for a few weeks. This ties into the project because Water Street was part of the RSA audit and is also part of the contemplated Bike Spur.

East Haddam Swing Bridge Rehabilitation

Construction started. Spur of the moment road closures in addition to the planned closures over the next three years.

Meet with large Chester employers

Charlene reported that Roto Frank needs 40K sqft in Chester. Presently renting storage space at Greenwald That company recently changed hands and there may be one year left on Roto Frank's lease. Pat presented a map that shows adjacent properties that could possibly be used to expand.

5. EDC Core Functions and Potential Assignments

Pat discussed the need for our EDC to focus on the following key areas:

- Gatekeeper/Single Point of Contact for Businesses



- Liaison with Community and EDC Organizations
- Communications with Businesses
- Inventory of Available Sites and Buildings

Within each category she listed possible assignments and initiatives. The discussion suggested a number of open EDC assignments where we should focus as we begin to build the EDC function. This list was discussed in some detail and will be formalized in future meetings as EDC membership increases. Regarding local EDCs, Carlie suggested that members of Chester's EDC take the first step of attending an Essex and Deep River EDC meeting as a means to being a dialog between the three towns on economic/business issues affecting the three towns.

Follow up: formally assign where possible at next EDC meeting, recognizing that some key functions will continue to be unassigned.

6. EDC Mail List

Carlie has reached out to area towns (Westbrook, Saybrook, Middletown, etc): there is no standard approach to collecting reliable or complete data. She suggests an email blast to existing names with the idea of growing interest in a expanding the list through referrals. She is working with the assessor as one source but it is clear that there is no one data source.

7. Proposed Meeting Schedule 2023

EDC meetings will continue to meet on the second Mondays of the month at 4:30. Motion to approve and second: Carlie and Pat, respectively, motion passed. Jon will post the schedule.

8. Merchants of Chester raffle

The Merchants requested that the EDC sponsor a Merchant's raffle after the Rotary and Camp Hazen declined to do so. After reviewing the application, it was clear that the sponsor accept financial and legal responsibility for the event. The Merchants withdrew their request and are considering organizing as a 501C3 not for profit. This would enable them to sponsor their own events in the future.

9. Master Plan for Public Facilities/Convenience

Jon reported that this project was set to go and there was no desire to slow down any existing project. However, a volunteer is needed to get interested parties together and lead this initiative. This initiative is on hold pending a volunteer to take responsibility.

10. Governance Study Committee

Jon reported that the committee is making progress and that its 2nd meeting is 12/19/22 at 2:30 in person and via Zoom or equivalent. Pat mentioned that in her discussions with area town officials, it is clear that the lack of volunteerism extends beyond area towns and beyond Connecticut. She made the point that in the past, people were born, raised, and died in their communities. People are more transient and don't have the multigenerational roots where there is a tradition of community involvement. That, coupled with increasing demands on families



during evenings and weekends, has left communities without an adequate number of volunteers to staff unpaid position. Her point is that Chester is not in a unique situation.

11. Community volunteerism and leadership initiative:

Carlie provided comments on the approved proposal. Jon wanted to incorporate them into a revised RFP but decided to hold this initiative since he is focused on the 60 day Governance Study Committee initiative. Jon mentioned that this is yet another opportunity for residents to be engaged as an EDC member or as a citizen who wants to take on a specific project under the sponsorship of an existing Commission/Committee.

12. Audience of citizens

Linda discussed the need to coordinate the EV/Sustainability with other related projects in a way that doesn't slow up their progress.

Linda discussed the vacancies listed in the town web site. There are no links on this list to find out more about the vacancies or the organizations that they represent. The Chester Partnership is an example where there are 5 openings and if someone was interested in applying or learning more, there is no linkage to get the information. Tree warden is a paid position and should not be on the list. Her point was that we should clean up the list, provide detail and a pathway for interested people to get involved.

Linda suggested ways to get people involved: a Chester involvement fair, sending mailings to residents featuring volunteers explaining why they are involved. She also suggested that a Community Involvement Tent at the Chester Market may not be too effective since the majority of people at the market are from outside of Chester.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:43, Motion and seconded by Pat and Carlie, respectively. Motion passed.

Submitted by
Jon Joslow, its Chair