



CHESTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED

October 10, 2023 at 4:30pm

Location: Chester Town Office Meeting Room - Fl 2

1. Seating of members

Pat Bandzes called the meeting to order at 4:33pm.

Commission members present: Pat Bandzes, Rebecca Mead, Cindy Lignar, Doug Mahana, Carlie Dailey.
Tourism Representative: Bekah Wright.

Audience of Citizens: Ron Amara, Caryn Paradis arrived at 5:00pm

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Cindy motioned for approval of 09/11/23 Meeting DRAFT minutes. Rebecca seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Announcements

Sustainable CT Silver Certification

Chester is among the 5 Connecticut municipalities to be recognized this application period for achieving Sustainable CT Silver certification. Sustainable CT is a statewide initiative that inspires and supports communities to become more efficient, resilient, and inclusive. Chester met high standards in a broad range of sustainability accomplishments to qualify for the prestigious Silver-level certification. The awards celebration will be held on October 17, from 4-7pm in Winsted. All are welcome to attend! Visit sustainablect.org for more information, including grants that Chester is now eligible for as a Silver certified town.

Chapco 60th Anniversary Open House - 10/11 12pm - 6pm

Chester-based Chapco is celebrating their 60th anniversary with an open house on October 11 from 12-6pm. Chapco is a manufacturing company in Chester and a new member of the Middlesex Chamber. Several state and local public officials are expected to attend. The ribbon cutting will happen at 11am, with the open house starting at 12pm which includes tours of the facilities. EDC members will make every effort to attend.

4. Updates

Apple Rehab Chesterfields

The State of CT has approved the closing of this facility and the site is officially listed for sale for \$1.5 million. The lot is 1.94 acres, plus a .5 acre lot across the street. This could be a possible opportunity for the town to purchase the .5 acre parcel lot as it abuts North Quarter Park. A meeting is scheduled with RiverCOG to discuss proactive planning strategies.

Cell Tower Lease Agreement

We understand that the lease agreement has been signed and submitted to the development company. An update on next steps is forthcoming from the selectmen.

CTVISIT/Tourism Filming

This was a huge success! The footage will be used by the State of CT for various tourism marketing materials over the next 10 years and will also be made available to Chester. CT Tourism is interested in coming back for additional footage for waterfront eating.

EDC Initiatives

Chester's town engineer is now up to date on the various EDC initiatives and is willing to work with us on moving them forward.

5. New Business

Merchant Rack Cards

The Merchants are requesting funding from the EDC for rack cards. This is something that was done in previous years, then stopped for unknown reasons. The Merchants recently contacted Pat to see about reinstating this policy and Pat solicited feedback from the Commission.

These cards provide information on businesses in Chester and are distributed to potential customers throughout the year at places such as The Big E, CT visitor centers, the Middlesex Chamber, marinas, and Chester merchants. All cards are hand-delivered except the visitor centers and The Big E which require FedEx delivery.

The request is approximately \$350 for printing and mailing costs. The design work was previously done by Mandy Carroll and will be taken over by Rebecca Mead.

Bekah noted Chester has an account with Pages in Deep River which could help reduce printing costs. Rebecca can also look into other printers as a more cost-effective option. It was discussed that contributing to this expense is a great way to support the Merchants and to strengthen our relationship with them. The EDC is amenable to the idea; however, additional information is needed from Chris Howe. Rebecca and Bekah will follow up with Chris.

East Haddam EDC Invitation - "Neighbor to Neighbor" Program

Lauren Pszczolkowski, the East Haddam Economic Development Coordinator, contacted us regarding participating in this program. The EDC has discussed something similar in previous meetings and is very interested in getting more information. Pat will reach out to Lauren and request that she attend a future meeting to obtain additional information.

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6. Guest Speaker - Caryn Paradis

Caryn shared a conceptual idea for “Chester Arts”. She requested that this information not be shared outside the Commission since it is very preliminary. The attending audience member was permitted to listen to the presentation.

7. Audience of Citizens

Bekah Wright

Bekah provided an update from a recent Harbor Commission meeting. Steve inquired about a shuttle service from the different marinas to the Village. There was a budget at some point; could we bring it back?

There are a number of abandoned boats in the marina, these could possibly be recycled into road paving, or other items. Bekah will share the name of the person at DEEP with Cindy to inquire.

The Harbor Commission is inquiring about publicity signs on the highways to include marina info and encourage tourism.

Ron Amara

No comments

8. Adjournment

Next Meeting will be held on Monday, November 13, at 4:30pm.

Motion to adjourn by Carlie, Rebecca seconds. Meeting adjourns at 5:53pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Carlie Dailey, Recording Secretary