

**Chester Economic Development Commission  
Meeting, April 14, 2014  
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1. Call to Order

The Chester Economic Development Commission held its regular meeting on Monday, April 14, 2014, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Flett called the meeting to order at 7:25 PM.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Stephen Flett, Susan Wright, Michael Sanders and Felise Cressman.

3. Audience of Citizens - none.

4. Discussion of 2014 Program Initiatives

- C-Pace - Update

Chairman Flett noted this program was sponsored by the Energy Committee. The Town received a \$5000 Grant for promoting alternative energy. After the residential program, they did a presentation using representatives from utilities companies to Chester businesses. Sixty six companies were invited by mail. Forty five invited by phone. Eight companies attended. Two companies expressed interest and followed up - Cherry Hill and AeroCision. The criteria for this program requires a sizeable investment. There were a lot of questions and interesting ideas. Chairman Flett noted it was a worthwhile meeting.

Chairman Flett noted there are a number of other programs he has discussed with First Selectman Meehan. One program by the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission has \$300,000 in an unallocated account prepared to make loans anywhere from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with very few restrictions as to how it could be used. Some suggestions were building additions or new energy efficient equipment. These loans are provided at 4% fixed interest over 10 years. This program was presented to a couple of people, but basically it had to be a project not already funded. These particular programs don't refinance existing loans.

There was discussion regarding the utility distribution company debacle. It had been noted that if 100 people signed up, the Town would receive something in return. Anyone who did sign up at that time has now seen their rates go up and people are screaming about it. Felise Cressman noted her CL&P flat rate has also gone up. It was noted when the Town is promoting a certain program, people look differently upon it. Members agreed the Town needs to fully understand these programs before endorsing them.

Chairman Flett noted there is a State Website that maintains a list

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of current programs and their rates. He has asked the Selectman's Secretary if a link could be put on the Town's website.

- Merchants Update

Susan Wright reported on the Merchants Update. She noted the Winter Carnivale was very successful being attended by about 4000 people. Exit 6 off Route 9 was closed in both directions. Businesses and restaurants did very well. They are trying to decide whether or not to do this next year. There would need to be a plan in place to deal with road closures. Michael Sanders noted every project has to have a traffic mitigation plan and a lot of the mitigation can be done as part of the project (communication with businesses, signage, etc.).

Susan Wright noted SCORE is being brought in to do a couple of programs being sponsored by the Essex Savings Bank.

It was noted there have been several business changes in Town. Hammered Edge has moved to Ivoryton. The Local Beet has closed. Just Foods has moved. Elle Design will be reopening at the Local Beet location. Brown Eyed Girl will move to 4 Water Street. Cabo has closed (can't afford cost of propane).

It was noted the Chester Sunday Market starts June 14<sup>th</sup>. Susan Wright noted she is trying to get them to come talk with EDC. EDC could have a booth there. Previously all the money went back into the Market, but its now an LLC so its privately owned. They are not doing the Chester Market Tent any more. It's harder to get volunteers when its more of a business as opposed to a non-profit.

There was discussion about having a banner across the State highway on Route 154 near the Fair Grounds.

There was further discussion regarding having a traffic mitigation plan. Parking during bridge construction was discussed. Felise Cressman noted merchants need to be educated about parking. Employees should not be parking on Main Street, but in a municipal lot. Chairman Flett suggested talking to the Main Street Project consultant about this issue.

There was a brief discussion regarding spotlighting businesses.

It was suggested having a "project app" during construction of the bridge advising people of its progress and what's happening on any given day. It was noted communication is important. Someone would need to be in charge of updating the app.

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Chairman Flett noted the Commission should come up with a calendar of events that it is working on. He will check with First Selectman Meehan to see if a traffic mitigation plan is already being worked on and who the consultant is for the Main Street Project.

It was noted there is a public informational meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> regarding Phase 1 of the Main Street Project. The sidewalk and storm drainage control are topics of discussion.

In summary, Susan Wright will follow up with the Essex Savings Bank and SCORE.

Chairman Flett will talk to First Selectman Meehan and the Main Street Project consultant about a traffic mitigation plan and having a banner across Route 154 during construction.

5. Approval of Minutes - February  
Tabled until the next meeting.

6. Adjournment

Motion by Cressman, second by Wright, to adjourn at 8:30 PM.  
**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Brown".

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary