

1. Call to Order

The Chester Economic Development Commission held its regular meeting on Monday, December 9, 2013, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Steve Flett called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Steve Flett, Michael Sanders, Susan Wright and new member, Felise Cressman. Also present was First Selectman Ed Meehan.

Chairman Flett welcomed Felise Cressman to the Commission.

3. Audience of Citizens – none.

4. Review of 2013 Accomplishments and Annual Report Submission

5. Discussion of 2014 Program Initiatives with Ed Meehan

Chairman Flett noted over the past year EDC had set out a series of different initiatives and a lot of those have now been completed. He noted 2014 is an opportunity to set out a list of new initiatives. One objective is to get more town/community awareness of EDC and what it can provide to the community. At the same time, EDC should put together some programs that would be rewarding both for the town and EDC members.

Chairman Flett noted he put together a list of ideas part of it generated by the fact that the Commission has been restructured to 5 members instead of 7 members which alleviates the problem of getting a quorum and having multiple meetings canceled. Flett further noted there were 3 levels of initiatives. One being keeping EDC in the loop. EDC should be more proactive in identifying opportunities and bringing them to the First Selectman. Chairman Flett noted this group was established as an advisory group to the First Selectman. The key is for EDC to listen to what is going on in town. A suggestion would be to have a representative attend the Board of Selectmen meetings on a fairly regularly basis in order to identify items being dealt with by the BOS and what EDC might bring to the table relative to those items. This would enable EDC to act on a proactive basis rather than on a reactive basis. Attendance at the BOS meetings would not necessarily have to be every meeting and it wouldn't have to be the same member attending all the time. Susan Wright asked what types of things EDC would be looking at from the BOS meetings.

Michael Sanders noted years ago there used to be meetings where all the Chairs of the various boards and commissions would meet and give an update on what each of them was working on. First Selectman Meehan noted that does not currently happen. Sanders also noted about 5 years ago EDC had representatives attend various other board and commission meetings and those individuals gave a monthly report back to EDC.

Felise Cressman asked why Chester is not trying to get more businesses to move into town. The Town of Branford recently got 4 new businesses and Branford encourages new businesses. First Selectman Meehan noted there is a 25,000 square foot building vacant on Inspiration Lane. He urged the owner of that property to let him know if there are any prospects as the Town might be able to offer some incentives. Sanders noted advertising Chester is difficult – it does have great access to the highway but it also has a small labor market.

First Selectman Meehan noted he did an inventory of vacant properties about a year ago. He briefly reviewed the inventory. Chairman Flett noted EDC has been able to assist businesses that are looking to come to Chester. First Selectman Meehan noted discussions with Land Use Commissions are important.

There was a discussion regarding Town Regulations, past discussions regarding the Route 154 Corridor and the Village.

There was discussion as to whether or not EDC should be an ad hoc committee, rather than a Commission. What impact does EDC want to have for economic development.

Felise Cressman asked if businesses have been complaining. It was noted parking is a big issue in the Village. There should be more accessible parking, parking should be better lit and more signage. Felise noted the darkness of the Maple Street Parking Lot bothers her. If it was better lit, more people would use it.

There was discussion regarding having a series of presentations designed to assist existing businesses develop their businesses. The event recently held in Clinton was discussed.

With reference to the suggestion of attending BOS meetings, First Selectman Meehan noted he could keep EDC posted on what's going on and an EDC member could check the agendas to see what's on it to determine if there is an item that warrants attendance.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the proposal of Aaron Manor to connect to the Town sewer system and whether EDC should present an opinion at the public hearing.

There was a suggestion EDC might meet quarterly with the option of augmenting these meetings with "special meetings" if necessary. Perhaps monthly or bi-monthly meetings could be held. It was decided to stay with the monthly meetings.

Topics for discussion for the January meeting were reviewed.

6. Approval of Minutes – September

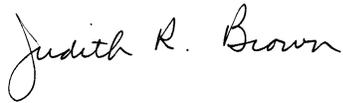
**Motion by Sanders, second by Wright, to approve the September Minutes as written. Unanimously approved.**

First Selectman Meehan reviewed the CPACE Program which was approved by the Town back in May. He noted the CT Clean Investment Fund would like to collaborate with EDC and invite Chester businesses to a breakfast meeting tentatively planned for February 12th. The CPACE Program would be explained at that time. There was discussion regarding some possible repairs at Cherry Hill that might come under this Program. Meehan reviewed the Towns that have already joined.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary