

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT 4/16/09**

**By Joe Seacrist**

- 1. Have had discussions with Mark Marabito, project manager for the Watertown Renewable Power Project (Tamarack) over the course of the month. He indicated that they have a new equity partner, Energy Investors, out of Boston. Energy Investors has purchased the project and will be responsible for moving forward with construction. Mark is proposing a meeting the week of April 20-14 to introduce the new equity partners, and would like to have Chuck Frigon, Elaine Adams, Joe McGrail, Sean Williams, Rob Kane and me attend. They will be prepared to answer any questions we might have about the future of the project. It appears that all but a very small part of the construction funds are now available and the groundbreaking can move forward. Apparently the new investors have lined up all the banking relationships they need to move forward.**
- 2. Worked with Congressman Murphy's office, Sean Williams, Rob Kane, Joe McGrail and Chuck Frigon to help solidify the sale of the former Drivesol Corporation to a group of Chinese Investors. They have changed the name to Global Steering Corporation and have paid all the past due taxes, totaling approximately \$481,000 to the Town of Watertown. This helped to avert a financial crisis for the town budget this year, if we would have had to deal with \$481,000 fewer tax dollars in the current budget. The new owners indicate they have no desire to move the plant or its operations. In fact, the new owners are one of the world's largest automotive parts suppliers, and have tentative plans to bring more business to the Watertown location from other locations in the country and abroad.**
- 3. Received and passed on a request from a Hartford area space consultant for the availability of 15,000sf of class "A" office space in the Watertown area. Passed the information on to several local commercial real estate consultants who might have such space.**
- 4. Working with a well known Deli franchiser for a Watertown location for expansion of their franchise. Discussed several possible locations and put him in touch with the appropriate land owners.**
- 5. Worked with Sean Williams and the Waterbury Chamber staff to make sure Raised Bill No. 6636 "An Act Concerning the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund" gets passed through the legislature this session. The passage of this bill, with Representative Williams and Senator Kane's support will make the selling of power from the Watertown Renewable Energy Project much easier.**

- 6. Receive a letter from Brandon Dufour, the General Manager of All Star Driver, that they have purchased the assets of the Academy of Driving on Straits Turnpike and intend to stay in Watertown and will continue all services uninterrupted and will hold all classes and schedules the same. All Star Driving is an affiliate of All Star Transportation, the largest privately held school bus company operating solely in Connecticut.**
- 7. Hosted the Watertown/Oakville Chamber of Commerce Annual Legislative Breakfast on March 27 at the Siemon Company. It featured Rob Kane and Sean Williams. Sean had to leave early, but Rob stayed to answer all questions from the group.**
- 8. Continue to work with the Waterbury Development Corporation and the Shelton Economic Development Corporation on the preparation of the renewal of the area's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This document is required if the Town ever requested Federal Economic Development Assistance.**
- 9. Working with the current lease holders of the Sophie restaurant to help them find a restaurateur who would like to take over the lease. One rather prominent local restaurateur has indicated a desire to put a location in Watertown, so I have put the two parties together. The current lease holder of Sophies is current on all lease obligations and payments, while no longer operating the restaurant as a going concern.**
- 10. Indications are that a popular local pizza restaurant has temporarily ceased operations. It is hoped that they will soon be able to open again.**
- 11. Lou Longo has almost completed his Davis Square retail center on the corner of Davis and Colonial Street and has three tenants, including the Fero Dollar store, a Cut Above hair salon, and a third business called A Better Way of Life. Mr Longo has yet to complete the landscaping, but otherwise all is ready for even more tenants. He asked me to thank the EDC for all its support during the permitting process.**
- 12. Working with the Recreation Department of get more vendors for the Watertown Farmer's Market. Two vendors from last year, the Soaps retailer and the green cleaning products will not be returning. The soaps retailer has moved out of town, and the cleaning products person indicated they could not make a commitment for all Saturdays. However, he have a potential new vendor. Mr. Dave**

**Bryenton , the Vice President of Fresh Trak Foods, LLC, based in East Granby, CT. They specialize in making the highest quality fresh salsa available in the area - you may have heard of Salsa Loca before. In addition to blue and white organic tortilla chips they will have four different varieties of fresh Salsa Loca (mild, just right, hot, bbc) and fresh guacamole! All of their products are totally natural, and they even package their salsa in eco-friendly corn plastic containers! They never use anything artificial or any cooked tomatoes - most of our salsa is raw food.**

- 13. Have had continuing discussions with CGI concerning their willingness to produce a series for videos for free for the town website. They will be making a presentation tonight.**
- 14. Continue to have discussions with the developer of the former Griffin school concerning the potential development of that property for commercial use.**