

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR'S REPORT 5-20-2010

Submitted by Joseph Seacrist

- 1. Sent letter (attached) to the Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission as a result of a motion passed at the last EDC monthly meeting. The letter expressed the EDC's support for a medical complex to be built in Watertown, but left the decision on text amendments up to the appropriate land use boards.**
- 2. Wrote a Economic Viewpoint column for the current edition of the Town Times, copy attached here.**
- 3. Finalized the plans for the annual Watertown Economic Development Commission "meet and Greet" to be held on Wednesday June 9, 2010 at the Casa Dijanna restaurant, 545 Main Street in Watertown. The hours are 5:00 until 7:00 with beer and wine and appetizers available. Was able to work out with the owners an offer of 25% off the individual dinner bills for people who would like to stay for dinner after the reception. The even will be held in their private room upstairs and is open to all Watertown/Oakville business owners and managers.**
- 4. Joined the Connecticut Economic Development Association or CEDAS on behalf of the Watertown Economic Development Commission. A membership for the entire commission is only \$100 a year for the entire commission. CEDAS regularly sponsors programs and seminars on legislation, financing and other topics of interest to Economic Development professionals. Technical assistance for solving an economic development problem is available for CEDAS members who request it. CEDAS also publishes an e-newsletter that reports CEDAS news, statewide economic development issues and events, the status of legislation, training programs and employment opportunities. As the focal point of information, I will forward pertinent information to members of the commission.**
- 5. Discussed with a local commercial real estate broker the possibility of a new owner seeking to purchase the former Keeler and Long (PPG) manufacturing facility in the business park. Was able to put the broker in contact with the pertinent personnel at PPG, who are the current owners.**
- 6. Sent an e-mail blast to all Watertown/Oakville businesses for which I have an e—mail address, warning them of the coming elimination of manufacture of T-12 fluorescent bulbs which most of them have in their businesses. The e-mail pointed out how they could apply for**

- 50% matching funds from the Connecticut Clean Air Fund to retrofit their lighting fixtures at half cost. Received several thank you responses.**
- 7. Spent more than a hour with the new membership salesperson for the Watertown/Oakville Chamber of Commerce to help him understand the nature of local businesses.**
 - 8. The owners of the “Blockbuster” plaza have approached the P&Z again with a preliminary meeting to discuss, I assume, the construction of another building to be built adjacent to the current building. Since no formal application has been made at this point, it is not exactly clear what their plans are.**
 - 9. Discussions with the current owner of the former Griffin School property are ongoing.**
 - 10. Continue to work with the Business Subcommittee of the Town Council on possible procedures for making it easier for businesses to find their way through the Town permitting processes.**
 - 11. Met with Lynn McHale of the Watertown/Oakville merchants association to discuss ways that the EDC can work with her group.**
 - 12. Attended the Thomaston Bank’s annual breakfast meeting at a country club in Harwinton to hear the featured speaker Rudolph Guilini, former mayor of New York City. This is an annual invitation only breakfast meeting for the business customers of Thomaston Bank and invited others.**
 - 13. Still working with a local company, to see if there can be some help from the town with their current property tax situation.**



April 21, 2010

Watertown Planning and Zoning Commission
51 Depot Street- Suite 502
Watertown CT 06795

Dear Commissioners,

At its regular monthly meeting on April 15, 2010, the Watertown Economic Development Commission voted unanimously to support the concept put forth by Dr. McHugh which would bring a medical complex to the industrial area.

The commission did not vote to endorse any particular version of proposed text amendments, deciding to leave those decisions up to the appropriate land use boards.

The Watertown Economic Development Commission does believe, however, that permitting the building of medical buildings and ancillary structures will result in greater tax revenue for the town, and will create additional jobs, something the Watertown Economic Development Commission has always supported.

Sincerely,

Joseph McGrail
Chairman
Watertown Economic Development Commission

Cc: Town Manager
Town Council
Watertown Economic Development Commission

ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT
By Joe Seacrist, Watertown Economic Development
Coordinator

**JOIN THE EDC FOR A FREE “MEET AND GREET”
SOCIAL HOUR JUNE 9TH**

Owners and Managers of Watertown/Oakville Businesses, both large and small, should save Wednesday June 9, 2010 for free attendance at the annual Watertown Economic Development Commission’s “Meet and Greet” reception to be held at the Casa Dijanna Restaurant 545 Main Street, Watertown in their private room upstairs from 5:00 until 7:00 pm. Complimentary Beer and wine and hors d’oeuvres will be served.

Attendees should RSVP by Friday May 28th by calling (860) 945-5255. Attendance is limited, so an RSVP is necessary.

We welcome all business owners, both large and small, to attend and meet fellow business owners, members of the Economic Development Commission, and city officials from Watertown/Oakville for a networking opportunity. The goal is to increase business for all companies in our town, exposing them to potential customers and suppliers right in our own community.

As an added plus, thanks to the owners of Casa Dijanna, attendees will receive a free coupon at the event which will entitle them to 25% off dinner at Casa Dijanna that same evening only, June 9, 2010 if they decide to stay for dinner following the reception.

In these tough economic times the Watertown Economic Development Commission wants to help our community “keep it local” by providing a forum to “meet and greet” fellow businesspeople in our town. Please come and join us for some fun, good conversation and possible new leads for your businesses.

**WATERTOWN/OAKVILLE NOT LOSING LARGE
PROPERTY TAX PAYERS**

Given the tough economic times, Watertown/Oakville has only lost one major manufacturer, Risdon Corporation, to the economic downturn, and thanks to the hard work of Mary DiSisto our Town Tax Collector, we were able to recover all the property tax Risdon owed the Town before they closed their Watertown operations.

Certainly other major manufacturers in town have sadly had to reduce workforces and reduce manufacturing hours, but they have managed to stay in business and provide the town with property taxes. Most of the local manufacturers are sharing in the slight increase in the national economy and are generally optimistic about an economic recovery in the coming years. Consumer spending has been moving slowly upward in the past couple of months, which is a good sign for the overall economy. In these times, the Watertown Economic Development Commission is devoting much of its effort to keeping the businesses we have and the taxes they pay while adding several retail shops.

Watertown/Oakville has only three large manufacturing buildings which are empty, (the former KX industries building on Park Road, the former Henlopin Manufacturing building on Park Road and the Seeley Property in Oakville) although they all continue to pay their property taxes. Both the Henlopin Building and the Seeley building are in the final stages of a pollution remediation process and are expected to be on the sales market in the near future. Local commercial real estate brokers are aware of these properties and are working hard to find buyers.

The conclusion is that while large new companies are not ready yet to make a significant new investment in property and jobs in Watertown/Oakville, we have at least not lost significant ground on property tax income from the large employers, keeping the tax burden on the residential taxpayer as stable as possible.



Watertown's Economic Development Commission

cordially invites
Local Businesses
to a free, casual

***Meet and Greet Social Hour
Wednesday, June 9, 2010
from
5:00 pm to 7:00 pm***

at the Casa Dijanna Restaurant
545 Main Street, Watertown

Attendees, thanks to the generosity of Casa Dijanna, will receive a coupon for 25% off their dinner bill that night only, should they decide to stay for dinner.

RSVP no later than May 28, 2010
at 860-945-5255