

Commission on Economic Competitiveness

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 7, 2016

10:30 AM IN ROOM 2D OF THE LOB

I. CONVENE MEETING:

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 AM by Chairman Rep. Tong.

The following commission members were present:

Rep. William Tong, Joseph McGee, Commissioner Kevin Sullivan, Commissioner Catherine Smith, Seth Ruzi, Rep. Fred Camillo, Rep. Jeffrey Berger, Steven Glazer, Rep. Chris Perone, Joseph Brennan, Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Jeffrey Hyde, Rodney Williams, Heather Somers, Sen. Scott Frantz, Sen. Joan Hartley, Matthew McCooe, Jennifer Berigan for Lori Pelletier, Derek Thomas for Ellen Shemitz

Absent were:

Sen. John Fonfara, Rep. Chris Davis, Henry Teskey

II. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRS:

Rep. Tong pointed out that the commission has several new members as a result of legislation (May Special Session, PA 16-3) that was passed during the May 2016 Special Session (new members listed below in section III/A).

The co-chairs explained that this meeting would serve as an introduction for the new members and an informational meeting for all members regarding changes in the charge/responsibilities of the commission going forward.

The co-chairs acknowledged the need for the commission to meet on a more regular basis going forward and it is their hope to hold a Saturday retreat in the fall. Exact date/location of said retreat TBD.

III. REVIEW OF RECENT LEGISLATION CONCERNING THE COMMISSION:

A. New Members

The chairs introduced the following new members of the commission:

NAME	APPOINTING AUTHORITY
Senator John Fonfara	Chair of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Representative Jeffrey Berger	Chair of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Senator L. Scott Frantz	Ranking Member of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Representative Christopher Davis	Ranking Member of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Senator Joan Hartley	Chair of the Commerce Committee
Representative Chris Perone	Chair of the Commerce Committee
Representative Fred Camillo	Ranking Member of the Commerce Committee
Matthew McCooe	Chairperson of CTNext
Henry Teskey	Minority Leader of the House of Representatives
Seth Ruzi (new appointing authority)	Ranking Member of the Commerce Committee

B. CT 500 Project

The co-chairs explained that the project's primary goals include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) A net increase of five hundred thousand new private sector jobs in Connecticut; (2) An increase of five hundred thousand new residents to Connecticut's population; (3) Five hundred new start-ups based on in-state developed intellectual property; (4) An increase of five hundred students in the number of annual graduates from each state college and university; (5) National top five status in the following areas: (A) Economic growth, (B) public education, (C) quality of life, and (D) private sector employee salary; and (6) Maintain Connecticut's position in the top five of the following areas: (A) Productivity, (B) higher education, and (C) income per capita.

The co-chairs further explained that the Commission on Economic Competitiveness is responsible for soliciting bids from outside consultants with expertise in economic development to develop the CT 500 Project on or before January 1, 2017.

Rep. Tong pointed out that it is important to recognize that the project has been designed to be very flexible allowing the commission to reset the goals described above at any time.

A discussion took place amongst the commission members regarding the funds that will be used to create and administer the CT 500 Project. The co-chairs explained that the funding will come from \$750,000 in state bonding that has been earmarked to hire consultants to help the CT 500 Project foster private sector job population growth in the state.

While discussing the project several members (Williams, Somers, and Sullivan) expressed the need for the commission to not lose sight of their original purpose and to not let these new charges divert the commission from their original and underlying mission. The need to prioritize and stick to the commissions goals was discussed at length.

C. Health Data Initiative

Chairman McGee explained that the McKinsey report identified one of the major opportunities for economic growth in Connecticut as the healthcare field and the use of health data as a means to improving patient care/access. He further explained that this initiative will be aimed at improving the healthcare of CT citizens while reducing costs through the use of technology imbedded in health data and the transfer of such data.

Several commission members questioned the need for the commission to undertake this responsibility as it seems it would be more appropriate and efficiently managed through one of the already existing state agencies.

Commissioner Smith offered the commission to rely on work that has already been done on this issue as to avoid “recreating the wheel”.

IV. ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

Chairman Tong introduced a letter for the record that was jointly signed by Frontier Communications, AT&T Connecticut, and New England Cable and Telecommunications Association. The signatories of the letter represent the major telecommunications providers in Connecticut. The letter addresses their grave concern about the report submitted to the Commission from the Business Council of Fairfield County Foundation. According to the letter the report (slides 51 and 52), entitled Connecticut Economic Competitiveness Diagnostic, Background Analysis, contained erroneous information concerning the quality and availability of broadband access networks and services in this state.

V. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Rep. Tong explained that the commission administrator will be sending a “doodle calendar” around to all members to select the next meeting date/time.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 PM by Chairman Rep. Tong.

Tom Spinella

Administrator