

**Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Notes  
June 5, 2014**

Attending: R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; G. Rucker; P. Simmons (Economic Development Coordinator)  
Absent: J. Albuquerque; D. Bergeron; R. Parady; P. Rubenbauer; F. Weissbach  
Guests: T. Gelston, S. Mackinnon; S. Wheeler

Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and noted that there was not a quorum.

Minutes – The review of the minutes from the May 1, 2014 meeting was tabled.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status Reports:**

Economic Development Coordinator – Mr. Simmons reviewed his June 5, 2014 report, a copy of which is attached to and made part of these minutes. He and the Commissioners discussed the impact of the State regulations on municipal tax incentive programs and agreed that there was room to improve the East Haddam program. Mr. Simmons agreed to draft revisions to the Town's current tax incentive guidelines.

Mr. Simmons distributed a document outlining his research on promoting outdoor recreation to encourage tourism and induce economic development. Ms. Mathiasen agreed to collaborate with Mr. Simmons to determine what opportunities are feasible.

First Selectman Update – Mr. Walter was not in attendance at the meeting and there was no update on the topics listed under this agenda item.

EDC Chairman Update – Mr. Casner reported on the following:

- Mr. Simmons has contacted a consultant to develop an estimate for the demolition of the garages on the Town Office site. Mr. Casner noted that, in addition to the demolition and removal of the building, water and power distribution to the remaining buildings on the site would have to be modified. He stated that the consultant's report would be used to apply for grant funding for the project. Mr. Casner advised that he would like to earmark \$4,000.00 in EDC's 2013-14 budget for the consultant's fee. The Commissioners agreed with his proposal.
- The Planning & Zoning and EDC sub-committee has made a great deal of progress on reviewing the properties in the Moodus and Four Corners sections relative to the Waste Water project. He advised that Mr. Ventres has agreed to develop proposed flows for potential build-out of the areas and Mr. Casner stated he would like to earmark \$4,500.00 from EDC's 2013-14 budget to pay for an engineer to prepare a cost/benefit analysis of improving the sewer systems in those areas. The Commissioners agreed with his proposal.
- Ms. Wheeler has been retained to re-write Chapter 8 of the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development to create actionable guidelines for future economic development. Mr. Casner advised that \$1,550.00 has been earmarked from EDC's 2013-14 budget for this project.

P&Z/EDC Waste Water Joint Committee – Moodus & Rt. 82/151 – Mr. Casner advised that he will present the proposal to hire an engineer to develop a cost/benefit analysis relative to potential improvements to the waste water issues in the Moodus and Four Corners area to the sub-committee at their next meeting.

Goodspeed Landing Committee – Mr. Casner stated that the Goodspeed Theatre is currently focused on their search for a new Executive Director and have been unavailable for meetings with this sub-committee. He advised that the sub-committee will resume meetings with the Goodspeed representatives once they have accomplished this goal.

Tourism Committee – Ms. Mathiasen reported that 7000 Tourism brochures were printed and reviewed how they will be distributed. She requested assistance with delivering the brochures to Town businesses.

East Haddam Business Association – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Taste of East Haddam/Business Expo was a big success and approximately 500 people attended the event. She noted that the Rotary helped with parking and crowd control and that the Business Association has received good feedback on the Expo and that they are soliciting additional feedback from the participants on ways to improve next year's program. Mr. Casner stated that he felt the event was very successful.

## **Other Business**

Directory Signs – There was no update on this agenda item.

Ms. Mathiasen distributed a report on the status of EDC's 2013-14 budget and reviewed several items. She recommended earmarking \$100.00 for a full page ad in the East Haddam Theatre Company's program for their summer productions at Gillette Castle State Park. The Commissioners agreed with her recommendation.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mail Received – Mr. Casner reported that EDC had received a copy of a letter from Shagbark requesting zoning changes for their property. He advised that Mr. Ventres has responded to the request and advised that the P&Z/EDC sub-committee is reviewing the zoning regulations for the Town and P&Z would consider Shagbark's request when that review was completed.

Public Comment/Other/EDC Ordinance Review – Mr. Casner recognized Mr. Gelston who stated that he is a member of the Conservation Commission but advised that he was not speaking for them tonight. He noted, however, that he felt the Conservation Commissions supported the opinions he was going to share with EDC.

Mr. Gelston stated that he believes there is a good deal of untapped economic opportunity for the Town in low-impact tourism. He discussed the attraction of the Open Space Trail system for hikers, bicyclers and equestrians. He stated that he feels the Town is underutilizing its riverfront access and there was a general discussion about the plans to build a dock between the Goodspeed and the airport.

Mr. Gelston made several recommendations regarding signage, accommodations, and better communication to the public. At Mr. Casner's request, Mr. Gelston agreed to draft a business listing sign for posting at the airport. Mr. Mackinnon stated he agreed with Mr. Gelston's opinion regarding the benefits of attracting more tourism to the Town.

Mr. Casner thanked Mr. Gelston for his comments and stated that tourism is one of EDC's priorities.

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ Sharon R. Wheeler  
Recording Secretary