

**Economic Development Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2015**

Attending: J. Albuquerque; D. Bergeron; R. Casner; R. Parady; D. Mathiasen; P. Rubenbauer; P. Simmons (Economic Development Coordinator); F. Weissbach

Absent: G. Rucker; K. Staehly

Guests: E. Blaschik; R. Viles; M. Walter; S. Wheeler

Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Minutes** – The minutes of the December 4, 2014 meeting were reviewed. Ms. Wheeler advised that Mr. Staehly had informed her of revisions he'd like her to make to the minutes and Mr. Casner noted a change to be made under the P&Z/EDC Waste Water Joint Committee agenda item.

MR. WEISSBACH MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. RUBENBAUER, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2014 MEETING AS AMENDED. MR. ALBUQUERQUE AND MR. BERGERON ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE. THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

Ms. Mathiasen distributed a list of the 2015 EDC meeting schedule.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status Reports:**

**Economic Development Coordinator** – Mr. Simmons presented his January 8, 2015 report, a copy of which is attached to and made part of these minutes. He also reported that the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission has depleted Express loan funds. He stated that they do have another loan program but it is not as beneficial as the Express loan program.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Casner, Mr. Simmons stated that he has asked Mr. Ventres to request P&Z withdraw its request for a retroactive special exception application from New England Propeller for their roof mounted solar panels. There was a general discussion regarding P&Z's requirement for a special exception applications for solar panels and the Commissioners felt that, in most cases, it is not appropriate.

Mr. Casner advised that he had been working as an intermediary with Shagbark to resolve issues related to wetlands, handicapped access restrooms and building/fire code violations. He stated that Shagbark's management has been receptive to EDC's assistance and they have made progress on correcting a number of items on the Fire Marshal's list of violations.

In response to a request made by Mr. Casner, Mr. Simmons agreed to review the regulations for the Town's IG zones and submit recommendations on language to clarify them.

**First Selectman Update** – Mr. Walter advised that he has been working with Mr. Simmons and the Friends of the Harris Property to draft a letter to the CT Office of Policy and Management regarding repurposing the STEAP grant that had been awarded to the Town in 2013 for the Center for Community Agriculture project. He summarized the contents of the letter and asked the Commissioners to provide him with their feedback. There was a general discussion regarding this issue and Ms. Mathiasen stated she would provide Mr. Walter with some bullet points for his letter on the economic value of the project.

Mr. Walter reported that he and Ms. Mathiasen had participated in a meeting with representatives from the towns of Haddam, Deep River, Essex, Higganum and Chester to discuss tourism in the lower river valley. He stated that the non-profit arm of the Griswold Inn had volunteered to assist in driving the project of marketing tourism for the area.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Casner, he advised that the Town has submitted a grant application for the Transfer Station project.

**EDC Chairman Update** – Mr. Casner reported on the status of several EDC committees as noted in the minutes below.

P&Z/EDC Waste Water Joint Committee – Moodus & Rt. 82/151 – Mr. Casner reported that the sub-committee will evaluate whether or not the capacity of the existing plant will accommodate the potential increased flow from the 4-corners area at its January 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Goodspeed Landing Committee – Mr. Casner stated that the committee’s next meeting is scheduled for January 22nd. Mr. Weissbach reported that he had spoken with an adjacent property owner regarding their interest in selling their property to improve the marketing prospects for the site and he had received favorable feedback. Mr. Weissbach also encouraged Mr. Walter to create a fund in the budget for economic development similar to the one that was created for Open Space purchases

Tourism Committee – Ms. Mathiasen reported that she had given a presentation on tourism to the Board of Selectmen at their January 7th meeting and reviewed the contents of her presentation. She stated that, this year, weekends in the spring (May 1-3) and fall (September 18- 20) will be listed in State guides as dates when special tourism events will be held in East Haddam. She advised that the Business Association’s Taste of East Haddam will be the anchor event for the spring weekend and the fall weekend will feature an open house at I-Park. She noted that she will notify Town businesses of the scheduled weekends and provide them with information on how they can participate if they choose to do so.

East Haddam Business Association – Mr. Casner reiterated that the Board of Selectmen and other Town officials will be meeting with the Business Association on January 21<sup>st</sup> for an exchange of ideas on how to improve the local business permitting process and create a more business friendly atmosphere in the Town.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

EDC Budget Request Review –Ms. Mathiasen reviewed EDC’s proposed 2015-15 budget and Mr. Casner stated that they had not made any significant changes from last year. Ms. Mathiasen noted that she will draft the section on 2014-15 Achievements and 2015-16 Goals.

Mr. Weissbach stated that if the development of Goodspeed Landing is going to be EDC’s principal project for 2015-16, funds should be included in the budget to move the project forward and accomplish its next steps. The Commissioners and Mr. Simmons discussed Mr. Weissbach’s recommendation and it was agreed to add \$20,000.00 to the budget specifically for the use of the Goodspeed Landing sub-committee and that the sub-committee would develop a project proposal to present to the Board of Finance.

MR. WEISSBACH MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. RUBENBAUER, TO APPROVE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION’S 2015-16 BUDGET AS PRESENTED AND TO SUBMIT IT TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Review Draft “Doing Business in East Haddam” Flier – Ms. Mathiasen noted that she had not received any comments on the draft she had sent out to the Commissioners so she would make copies for the January 21<sup>st</sup> joint Board of Selectmen/ Business Association meeting. She advised that she would incorporate appropriate changes that come of that the meeting and then research the cost of printing up the final fliers.

Mail Received – There was no mail discussed at the meeting.

Public Comment/Other/EDC Ordinance Review/Other – In response to a question raised by Mr. Weissbach, there was a general discussion regarding the use of the former bank building in the Village as a pub/micro-brewery.

In response to a question from Ms. Mathiasen, Mr. Casner stated that he has reached out to Representative Ziobron and will work with her to draft a proposal, for the CT DEEP’s consideration, regarding involving the Town in identifying potential opportunities for using Sunrise.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MS. RUBENBAUER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. WEISSBACH TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

The regular meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

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