

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Grange Hall
January 7, 2015
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: M. Walter; E. Lyman; E. Malavasi

Also Present: E. Blaschik; L. Bonadies; N. Bonadies; C. Brayfield; J. Brayfield; D. Carbo; R. Casner; G. Churney; J. Churney; J. Dill; R. Dill; T. Goodie; D. Hall; D. Hall; L. Hall; C. Jackson; P. Laffan; B. Lunt; J. MacCalmont; E. Marvin; D. Mathia; D. Mathiasen; M. McLaud Tonucci; J. Nemergut; R. Nemergut; R. Roy; R. Roy; S. Roy; J. Roger. Saldi; J. Shea; P. Simmons; A. Tonucci; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.
3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of December 17, 2014 and Special Meeting of December 23, 2014

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 17, 2014 as written. Mr. Walter abstained from the vote and the motion passed by a majority of ayes.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of December 23, 2014 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence:

Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packets from Kathlyn DiCristofaro, dated January 07, 2014. He stated that Ms. DiCristofaro wanted to thank several individuals who had assisted her daughter when she had a car accident on December 8th.

Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a draft letter he plans to send to the Connecticut 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 Selectmen to provide him with any feedback by January 13th.

- A. Letter from Martha Tonucci (12/30/14) to Planning & Zoning Regarding Skate Park: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of a letter addressed to the East Haddam Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission, dated December 30, 2014, and signed by Judith Trotochaud, Armand Tonucci and Martha McLaud Tonucci. Mr. Walter stated that P&Z Chairman Brownell will respond to the letter. He also advised that the transfer

of ownership of the Rotary Skating Park property to the Town is in process and that the Town cannot take any action on the lighting issue until the transfer is complete.

5. First Selectmen's Report:

- A. Tourism Update - Deb Mathiasen: Mr. Walter introduced Ms. Mathiasen and noted that she is a member of the Town's Economic Development Commission's (EDC) Tourism sub-committee. Ms. Mathiasen distributed a document outlining the efforts of and relationship between the CT DECD Offices of Culture & Tourism, the Central Regional Tourism District and the EDC's Tourism sub-committee. She noted that 65 towns participate in the Central Regional Tourism and she is East Haddam's representative.

Ms. Mathiasen reviewed several State publications and guides in which the Town is represented. She stated that, because of the number of notable tourist attractions in East Haddam, the Town is frequently well represented in many State publications without having to take out ads. She reviewed the activities of the EDC sub-committee on Tourism and advised that 55% of EDC's budget is dedicated to tourism-related items. She advised 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.

Ms. Mathiasen noted the importance of utilizing social media in the marketplace and distributed a document concerning Social Media & Website Analytics compiled by PITA Group for the Central Regional Tourism.

Mr. Walter thanked Ms. Mathiasen for her on-going tourism efforts on behalf of the Town. In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, Ms. Mathiasen stated she would add the local golf courses to the "What to Do" section of the Business Directory on the town's website.

- B. Disc Golf Course Presentation - Dan Carbo & Pat Laffan: Mr. Walter introduced Mr. Carbo and Mr. Laffan and stated they would provide the Selectmen with a presentation on creating a disk golf course in East Haddam.

Mr. Carbo provided the Selectmen with a brochure related to disk golf and their proposal to create a course in East Haddam. He stated that disk golf is an inexpensive sport that all ages can participate in and, once a course is installed, it generally has very low maintenance requirements. He advised that there are approximately 17-18 courses in Connecticut and the closest one to East Haddam is 1-hour away. He noted that disk golf enjoys a devoted following and it would attract new visitors to the Town.

Mr. Carbo and Mr. Laffan responded to several questions from the public. Mr. Walter thanked them for their presentation.

6. Citizens' Concerns: Mr. Tonucci noted that the lights at the Rotary Skating Park were scheduled to be turned on this evening and suggested that the Selectmen visit the area to

observe how they affect the adjacent properties. He inquired about the timing for transferring the property to Town ownership and Mr. Walter stated that the paperwork is in process.

Ms. Tonucci emphasized that the neighbors are in no way objecting to public skating on the pond but simply want their lighting concerns addressed. Mr. Walter stated that the Town is committed to alleviating the lighting problems at the Park once it owns the property.

Mr. Shea stated that a hedge on the property adjacent to his is obstructing his view when he backs out of his driveway and is also problematic for people walking on the sidewalk. At Mr. Walter's request, Ms. Lunt agreed to follow-up on this issue.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Blight Ordinance Discussion: There was no new update on this agenda item.
- B. A.P. Gates Road/Warner Road Drainage Discussion: There was no new update on this agenda item.
- C. Woel Road Discussion: There was no new update on this agenda item.
- D. Emergency Communications Center Contract for Municipal Services Discussion: Mr. Walter provided background on this agenda item and advised that the Town is waiting for the proposal from Valley Shore to make a final decision but it is committed to fulfilling its contract with KX.
- E. Maple Avenue/Landing Hill Stop Sign Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that he has contacted UConn's Transportation Institute for input on the use of stop signs at several of the Town's intersections. Public Works Director Lunt reviewed site visits she had made to the intersections with representatives from the Department of Transportation.

Mr. Walter advised that he and Public Works Director Lunt will meet with a representative of the CT DOT on January 8th to discuss the use of stop signs at several intersections. He agreed to make DOT's analysis available to Mr. and Mrs. Dill.

8. New Business

- A. Tax & Business Incentive Program Ordinance Discussion: Mr. Walter introduced Economic Development Coordinator Peter Simmons and invited him to speak about his recommendations for changes to the Town's Tax & Business Incentive Program. Mr. Simmons provided a brief overview of the program and advised that it does not take full advantage of the Connecticut State Statutes on tax incentive programs. He stated that he is proposing changes to the Town's ordinance for the tax benefits allowed for middle and large size projects but noted that the benefits allowed for small projects already takes full advantage of the State's statutes.

There was a general discussion about which size projects can realistically be expected to take advantage of the Town's tax incentive program and Mr. Simmons responded to several questions from the Selectmen.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman to authorize Mr. Simmons to work with the Town's attorney to modify East Haddam's Tax & Business Incentive Program Ordinance. Unanimous aye.

- B. Proposed Reconstruction of O'Connell Road Extension Discussion: Mr. Walter asked Public Works Director Lunt to discuss the problems on O'Connell Road Extension. Ms. Lunt advised that, since it is a dirt road with very poor drainage, it regularly floods out after rainstorms and, consequently, Public Works employees spend a great deal of time regrading the road. She introduced Mr. Nemergut and stated that he is a Civil Engineer that the Town retained to analyze the situation and provide a recommendation for a resolution to the problem.

Mr. Nemergut elaborated on the erosion problems caused by the washouts and reviewed his recommendation to pave the road and implement drainage improvements. Ms. Lunt advised the estimated cost for the project is \$350,000.00. In response to a statement made by Mr. Walter, she confirmed that the amount represents approximately half of the Town's roadwork budget.

Mr. Walter opened the floor to the public and several members of the audience spoke about the impact of the washouts on their property. Mr. Brayfield stated that the electrical power for a section of the road is underground and explained that the lines are not buried very deeply and are not enclosed in a conduit. Mr. Walter advised that he would reach out to his contact at Connecticut Light & Power and ask her to provide assistance on this project.

Mr. Nemergut responded to a number of concerns raised by the residents of O'Connell Road Extension. He advised that his recommendation does not include correcting any elevation discrepancies between the road and the residents' properties. He stated that aprons with a depth of 10-12' would be installed at each driveway and confirmed that the width of the aprons would be the same as the existing driveway.

There was a general discussion about where the run-off water would be directed, the impact of the Town's dust control treatments to the road and the timing for the project if the funds are approved in the budget referendum. Ms. Lunt agreed to speak with the Board of Education to determine whether or not there would be any change in school bus pick-up/drop-off locations if the road is paved.

The consensus of the residents' in attendance at the meeting was in favor of the project.

At 8:55 p.m., Mr. Walter called for a short break; at 9:09 he called the meeting back to order.

- C. Sidewalk Ordinance Discussion: Mr. Walter advised that the Town's existing Sidewalk Ordinance doesn't comply with the statutory requirements for transferring liability to abutting property owners as discussed in a recent Supreme Court opinion. He advised that the Town Attorney provided language that would be sufficient to shift liability from the Town to the property owner which could be added as a new section (g) to the existing Sidewalk Ordinance. He noted that the Attorney also suggested the Town consult with its insurance company, CIRMA, for any additional suggestions prior to adopting at town meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to recommend that the Sidewalk Ordinance adopted by Town Meeting, April 6, 1988 be amended to include the following paragraph as follows and that said amendment be sent to Town Meeting for approval pending a final review by our insurance company:

(g)(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 13a-149 of the Connecticut General Statutes or any other General Statutes, or any other General Statute or Special Act, the Town of East Haddam shall not be liable to any person injured in person or property caused by the presence of ice or snow on a public sidewalk unless the Town of East Haddam is the owner or the person in possession and control of land abutting such sidewalk, other than land used as a highway or street, provided that the Town of East Haddam shall be liable for its affirmative acts with respect to such sidewalk.

(2) The owner or person in possession and control of land abutting a public sidewalk shall have the same duty of care with respect to the presence of ice or snow on such sidewalk abutting his property as the municipality had prior to the effective date of this section, adopted pursuant to the provisions of Public Act No. 81-340 (C.G.S. § 7-163a) and shall be liable to persons injured in person or property where a breach of said duty is the proximate cause of said injury.

(3) No action to recover damages for injury to the person or to property caused by the presence of ice or snow on a public sidewalk against a person who owns or is in possession and control of land abutting a public sidewalk shall be brought but within two years from the date when the injury is first sustained.

Unanimous aye.

- D. Tax Refunds: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to two tax refunds.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to award tax refunds in the amounts as presented.

- \$303.61 to Andrew Veselak
 - \$112.94 to Hyundai Lease Titling Tr
- Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: In response to a question raised by Mr. Shea, Mr. Walter advised that the Agriculture Commission will hold its next meeting on February 2nd at the Annex.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Dill, Mr. Walter stated that he is aware that the police are ticketing for stop sign violations; however, he will check with them to determine the frequency of such violations. Mr. Dill noted that if the public feels stop signs are unnecessary in certain locations and tend to ignore them, a dangerous situation is created.

Mr. Walter advised that the federal government has provided a grant to improve the visibility of stop signs and the DOT has begun to implement it in East Haddam.

Mr. Blaschik noted that CL&P had recently fixed a street light in the Village that had been out for three months.

10. Selectmen's Discussion

- A. Rail Corridor Study Stakeholders Workshop (January 22, 2015 from 4:00 – 5:30 pm):
Mr. Walter reminded the other Selectmen that a Stakeholders Workshop would be held at the Essex Town Hall on January 22nd to discuss the current study concerning the Valley Railroad State Park. He reiterated that the public is encouraged to attend.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary