

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION/
TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
LAND USE OFFICE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 24, 2015
(Not yet approved by the Commission)

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Brownell called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. at the Town Grange.

2. ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Crary Brownell–Chairman, James Curtin (regular member), Bernard Gillis (regular member), Ed Gubbins (regular member), Martha Hansen (alternate member), Richard Pettinelli (alternate member), Louis Salicrup (regular member) Harvey Thomas (regular member)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Kevin Matthews (regular member), Jessica Stone (alternate member)

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Ventres, Emmett Lyman, and 17 members of the public

Mr. Brownell appointed Mr. Pettinelli to vote in place of Mr. Matthews this evening.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the March 10, 2015 regular meeting were accepted with the following amendments:

- Page 5, paragraph 4, 8th sentence: Change “They” to “The”
- Page 7, paragraph 5, 3rd sentence: Change “He” to “Mr. Pettinelli”
- Page 9, last paragraph, last sentence: Add “is” after “This”

4. BILLS

NL Jacobson & Associates (annual bond unit update cost, Vile subdivision)	\$1252.19
Suburban Stationers	\$19.00
Gould, Larson, Bennet (Milan cais matter)	\$180.00

Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Pettinelli to approve payment of the bills as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A) New – Application #15-06, Ronald Zahecefski, 31 Alexander Road, Special Exception Review for an accessory apartment. Assessor's Map 71, Lot 102.

First date: March 24, 2015

Last date: May 28, 2015

No one representing the applicant was present at this meeting. Mr. Ventres reported that the applicant's attorney is handling this matter, as the property owner is in Alaska right now. This work has already been done.

Motion by Mr. Thomas to set a public hearing for April 14, 2015, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange to hear Application #15-06, Ronald Zahecefski, 31 Alexander Road, Special Exception Review for an accessory apartment. Motion seconded by Mr. Gillis, and carried by unanimous vote.

6. REVIEW OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Committee:

Mr. Peter Simmons, Economic Development Commission (EDC) Coordinator, submitted a proposed revision to Chapter 8. He stated last year they presented a draft re-write. They took the feedback they received from The Planning & Zoning Commission last year for this re-write. He noted this is a wholesale re-write. He explained that on the first page, the left column represents the existing, and the right column has the proposed changes.

Mr. Simmons stated from a demographic point of view from the 2007 Grand List data, we were at 6.1% commercial. We are now at 5.8%, which is not the way they want to go in commercial tax base. They hope this new proposal will help.

Ms. Deb Mathiason, EDC, stated their commission agreed to look at each area of town and ways to focus on some of these areas. They worked to identify what the issues were, who stakeholders are, and ways to move forward. There is some overlap in the locations, but in others, there are some unique items. They encourage the Planning & Zoning Commission to revise the Plan of Conservation and Development to reflect their strategies.

Mr. Bob Casner, EDC, stated they are losing their commercial and industrial values here. He stated they found that neighboring towns are out-competing our town. One big blow was when TriTown Plastics moved to Deep River. He stated that Deep River has been doing a good job in developing their commercial district. They have completed a sewer district, and they are now bringing in natural gas to Deep River. Lee Company is utilizing this in Westbrook, as well as the Town of Essex. Mr. Brownell asked where the main line came from, to which Mr. Casner believed it was coming from Westbrook. He stated this makes it difficult for our town. He believed we need to keep what industry we have. The Economic Development Commission needs to focus on tourism and the Route 82 corridor. They hoped to bring in more to the Village and Moodus. They need to look at what they can do well, such as restaurants and things tourists will be interested in.

Mr. Thomas noted there was background information, statistics, and re-organized of the thinking around geographic hubs, rather than a “shot gun approach”. It looks as though they have organized things around the village center, Shagbark and the four corners, and the industrial parks. Mr. Thomas suggested the commission review this proposal before responding to it. Mr. Casner agreed that would be beneficial. Ms. Mathiason stated the numbers were subject to updating as well, so she hoped for the commission’s assistance with that.

Mr. Curtin asked about the acreage breakdown on the third page. He asked if the open space included building lots being held in open space. Mr. Ventres believed this would be better described as Vacant land in the 490 program. He stated the exempt breakdown was very close to his number for State-owned land, conserved open space, etc. Mr. Thomas suggested they add a description from where those numbers came.

Mr. Curtin asked if the 500,000 number of visitors in the proposal was from the Goodspeed only. Mr. Casner believed the Goodspeed would account for approximately 100,000, and 250,000 from the Castle.

Mr. Pettinelli suggested they might try to attract boaters and kayakers coming to town. Mr. Curtin noted there was no real way to get people off the river to come into town. Mr. Thomas suggested organizing thoughts around Moodus, East Haddam Village, Shagbark four-corners, would allow them to think more crisply about areas at which to look.

Mr. Gillis asked about numbers for overnight accommodations. He believed that would be a good thing to really consider. Mr. Casner stated there are only 12 units for this. Ms. Mathiason stated there are cabins and campgrounds. She stated they discovered that a similar number of people staying overnight are people staying with relatives. In their research, they found that 40% were staying in accommodations, but 38% were people staying with relatives. She stated this would involve marketing to residents, not just visitors.

The consensus of the commission was to tentatively continue this discussion to the next meeting.

Mr. Ventres distributed a checklist of the Planning & Zoning Commission’s accomplishments. He reviewed page 2 and suggested completing a zoning regulation review pertaining to noise regulations, and page 4 – still have not addressed the comprehensive road inventory. They originally thought about taking representatives from P&Z, IWWC, Conservation, Board of Selectmen, etc. Mr. Brownell suggested they review their list this year. Mr. Ventres will send a roundtable email for representatives to meet.

Mr. Ventres stated they should send a questionnaire in 2017, so they need to prepare it in 2016. Mr. Ventres believed this should be added to that budget year in order to accomplish that.

Mr. Brownell commented they did review and update several of the regulations.

Mr. Ventres distributed a listing of miles of trails estimate. He hoped for input on this. Mr. Gillis asked if Geoffrey Road was passable. Mr. Ventres responded that it depended upon what vehicle you had; however, it was noted that the road is walkable.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Brownell read the call for the following public hearing:

A) Continued – Application #15-03, DRA LLC (Radek Associates), 428 Hopyard Road, Creation of an educational/philanthropic not-for-profit artist-in-residence program to include new structures and new programs. Expansion of current I-Park General Residency Artist Program. Assessor's Map 61, Lot 12.

First date: March 10, 2015

Last date: April 14, 2015

Mr. Ventres read into the record a letter from Mr. Roger Nemergut dated March 23, 2015, asking for the item to be tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Brownell opened the hearing to the public. Ms. Gleeson believed it would be a good asset for the town.

Motion by Mr. Curtin, seconded by Mr. Gillis, and carried by unanimous vote to continue Application #15-03, DRA LLC (Radek Associates), 428 Hopyard Road, Creation of an educational/philanthropic not-for-profit artist-in-residence program to include new structures and new programs. Expansion of current I-Park General Residency Artist Program until the next regularly scheduled meeting on April 14, 2015, 8:00 p.m. at the Town Grange.

6. REVIEW OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (Continued discussion)

The commission discussed accessory apartments, and noted this was a change toward affordable housing aspects. They believed they would add a couple new subjects. Mr. Curtin asked about new technology. Mr. Ventres referred to the recent addition of solar panel projects. Mr. Brownell suggested that solar orientation should be a consideration, not a requirement.

8. ZEO REPORT:

Mr. Ventres has been working on the new open space projects, as well as WPCA. He has been working on an issue with the area of Triangle Drive, Mott Lane, and Eli Chapman Road.

A) Shagbark:

Mr. Casner stated he has been on vacation, but he contacted the fire marshal to set up the final inspection, which is scheduled for April 30. The building official has been going back and forth a bit, but they have a meeting set up for this Thursday morning to review the plans, the as builts, get the OK on the handicap bathrooms, etc. Mr. Pettinelli stated he stopped in to Shagbark the other day, and they had a boxed lawnmower blocking the emergency exit. He mentioned it, and to their credit, they did go move it right away.

B) Roof mounted solar panels

C) Food Vending Units

Mr. Ventres sent the drafts for both of these to Attorney Willis. They should be ready for a May 12, 2015 public hearing. Notifications have been sent to abutting towns and regional planning agencies.

Mr. Casner asked Mr. Ventres to send him a cleaned copy of what was going to public hearing.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Pettinelli, seconded by Mr. Thomas to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina