

**East Haddam Economic Development Commission**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**February 1, 2018**

Attending: J. Albuquerque; D. Bergeron; R. Casner; J. Fennema; I. Haines; R. Parady; S. Smith; K. Staehly  
Absent: F. Weissbach  
Guests: E. Blaschik; D. Mitchell; S. Wheeler

Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He sat Mr. Fennema for Mr. Weissbach. Mr. Casner welcomed Irene Haines to the Board.

**Minutes** – The Commissioners reviewed the minutes from the December 7, 2017 meeting. Several revisions were noted.

MR. FENNEMA MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. SMITH, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 7, 2017 AS AMENDED. MS. ALBUQUERQUE ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE AND THE MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

MR. BERGERON MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO NAME MR. CASNER AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. STAEHLY, TO NAME MS. SMITH AS VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

- a) Reappointment of Joe Albuquerque

MOTION MADE BY MR. PARADY, SECONDED BY MS. SMITH, TO RECOMMEND MR. ALBUQUERQUE'S REAPPOINTMENT AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status Reports:**

1. EDC Chairman Update

- a) Discussion of Possible EDC Director/Planner – Mr. Casner distributed several documents related to EDC's Goals/Objectives and Budget. He reviewed the 2017-18 goals and noted that the Commission was unable to meet several objectives, "*due to a lack of professional guidance/expertise*". The Commissioners discussed the availability of grant funding for municipal projects and the advantages of retaining an experienced economic development director/planner with grant writing and management skills.

In response to a concern raised by Mr. Bergeron, Mr. Casner confirmed that the job description for the proposed EDC Director/Planner position would include the responsibilities previously undertaken by the Economic Development Coordinator.

Ms. Smith volunteered to assist in compiling documentation, for presentation to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance, justifying the value of retaining an EDC Planner/Coordinator with grant writing and grant management skills.

- b) Town Office Site Review

- 1) Environmental Review of Site – The Commissioners discussed the delay in publishing a request for bid proposals for the environmental testing of the Town garage site.

MOTION MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN REQUEST TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT THE REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSALS FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING OF THE TOWN GARAGE SITE BE POSTED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY. UNANIMOUS AYE.

- c) Smith Farm, PZC Approval and Wildwood Consensus – Mr. Casner reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission had approved Smith Farm’s application to host events at the site. He noted that Smith Farm is located in a residential zone and the Wildwood condominium association expressed concerns about the request. He noted that P&Z gave their approval to Smith Farm with the qualification that it would be reviewed in one year. He stated that the approval could set a precedent and Mr. Staehly noted that the approval was made as “an accessory to farming” which would limit its being used broadly as a precedent. The Commissioners discussed potential business opportunities that could result from this and other similar non-conventional commercial enterprises.
  - d) EDC letter to EH News: Support Local Business & Business Profile of the Month – The Commissioners agreed to postpone discussion of this agenda item until later in the meeting.
2. First Selectmen’s Update – There was no update on this agenda item.
3. Goodspeed Landing Committee
- a) Goodspeed Landing Roadway Design – Mr. Casner reported that the proposed traffic circle design for the Village area was submitted to the River Valley Council of Governments (COG) which would conduct a feasibility study of the design and report back to the Commission.
4. Review of Chatham Health District (CHD) Performance – Mr. Casner introduced Mr. Mitchell, Director of Health for the Chatham Health District. Mr. Mitchell reviewed the history of his tenure as Director and the status of CHD’s finances. He noted that the state’s financial support of health districts has been diminishing.

The Commissioners and Mr. Mitchell discussed CHD’s fee schedule and Mr. Mitchell noted that representatives from each town in the District participate in the fee setting process. In response to concerns raised by several Commissioners, Mr. Mitchell stated he would raise the issue of creating a new category of temporary/seasonal fees for mobile food vendors at the next fee-setting meeting. He requested EDC send him a letter expressing their concerns regarding the fees charged for mobile food vendors for one-time and/or short-duration events.

Mr. Casner opened the floor for comments from the public and, in response to a question from Mr. Blaschik, Mr. Mitchell stated he did not have the amount of annual fees collected from East Haddam residents and businesses, however, he would be able to provide it when he got back to his office.

Mr. Casner thanked Mr. Mitchell for attending the meeting and providing more detail on CHD.

MOTION MADE BY MR. ALBUQUERQUE, SECONDED BY MR. STAEHLY, TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE CHATHAM HEALTH DISTRICT (CHD) STATING THEIR CONCERNS REGARDING THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS AND ALSO REQUESTING CHD PROVIDE A RECORD OF THE FEES COLLECTED FOR INSPECTIONS DONE IN EAST HADDAM. UNANIMOUS AYE.

5. Tourism Committee
- a) Visitors’ Guide – Ms. Smith reported that the 2017-18 supply of Visitors’ Guides has almost been depleted and recommended prioritizing distribution of the remaining guides to Town businesses. The Commissioners agreed with her recommendation. She reviewed planned updates to the Guide for the 2018-19 season and stated it would go to print in May and the vendor has agreed to 90 day net terms.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Joint Meeting with Haddam – Mr. Casner stated that the Haddam Economic Development Commission (EDC) would like to schedule a joint meeting in March or April. He noted that Chester’s EDC has expressed an interest in participating in the joint meeting. There was a general discussion about potential locations for the meeting and Mr.

Casner said he would coordinate the date and location with Haddam's and Chester's EDCs.

- B. Budget – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

MOTION MADE BY MS. SMITH, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO FORWARD THE PROPOSED 2018-19 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BUDGET TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

Mr. Bergeron recommended including some detail to the budget proposal to justify the increase in several line items.

UNANIMOUS AYE.

- C. Vision/Mission Statement – This agenda item was postponed for discussion at the next regular EDC meeting.

- D. East Haddam News/Events Magazine – Ms. Smith recommended EDC submit regular articles to the Events magazine and include a business profile. She noted the same could be done, on a monthly basis, with the East Haddam News. She suggested asking the selected businesses to draft their own profile and EDC could include it with their article. The Commissioners' supported her recommendations.

Ms. Smith noted that CCM conducts a class on grant writing and suggested inviting them to an EDC meeting to discuss what qualifications should be required for the EDC Director/Planner position.

- E. East Haddam Business Association Liaison – The Commissioners discussed appointing a liaison to the Business Association and Ms. Haines volunteered. Ms. Smith noted that it would also be beneficial if the Business Association appointed a liaison to attend the EDC meetings.

MOTION MADE BY MS. SMITH, SECONDED BY MR. ALBUQUERQUE, TO JOIN THE EAST HADDAM BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AND PAY THE MEMBERSHIP FEE OF \$50.00. UNANIMOUS AYE.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no additional public comment.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Staehly, Mr. Casner stated that he did not feel it would be appropriate for East Haddam's EDC to comment on business development on River Road in Haddam.

Mr. Staehly reviewed information put out by CERC regarding decreasing employment in the state.

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

The regular meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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