

East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2018

Attending: J. Albuquerque; D. Bergeron; R. Casner; J. Fennema; I. Haines; R. Parady; S. Smith
Absent: F. Weissbach

Guests: Z. Jezek; E. Lyman; R. Smith

1. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
2. Attendance – Mr. Casner sat Mr. Fennema for Mr. Weissbach.
3. Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting November 1, 2018 – Postponed.
4. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update

- a. EDC Administrator Position – There was no new update on this agenda item.
- b. Goodspeed Landing—Old Town Office Site – Mr. Casner reported that he expects the RFQ for the Goodspeed Landing Project will be completed by the first of the year. He noted that the Village Revitalization Committee (EHVRC) hopes to determine whether or not any grant funding will be awarded for an environmental clean-up of the site before publishing the RFQ. He asked First Selectmen Lyman to update the Commissioners on this agenda item.

Mr. Lyman confirmed that he expects to get a response from the state on the Town's brownfield grant application by the middle of December and that the EHVRC would like to hold off on publishing the RFQ until it hears from the state on the Town's brownfield grant application.

2. First Selectman Update – Mr. Lyman provided the following update:

- The Governor signed a major disaster declaration in connection with the severe rain storms that occurred on September 25th and 26th which means that FEMA will reimburse the Town 75% of eligible costs, which are approximately \$3.7M. Mr. Lyman noted that private citizens and corporations will be eligible for low-interest loans.
- The towns of East Haddam and Haddam jointly applied for \$18M BUILD grant to construct a walkway on Swingbridge and it is expected that the federal government will make its decision on the application in December.
- On December 10th, the Town's tri-board (Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance) will host a public presentation on the Town's budget. The meeting will be both educational and provide citizens with an opportunity to provide input into the 2019-2020 budget.

3. Tourism Committee

- a. Fall Weekend – Mr. Casner reiterated that the Fall Weekend was a great success and he complimented Ms. Haines on the implementation of the Holiday Doors project.

Ms. Smith reported that the CT Tourism Department sent her a copy of the presentation they did at the Business Association's recent Expo and they offered to do the presentation for EDC Commissioners. She stated that she has invited representatives for a site visit of the Town's tourism sites and they will assist her in linking an East Haddam page to the state's tourism website.

Ms. Smith stated that there is CT tourism conference scheduled for May that EDC should attend and that the Tourism Department representative suggested the Town have a presence in the state's tent at 2019 Big E.

Mr. Casner reported that the 5-town EDC sub-committee is collaborating with Eversource and the 9-Town Transit commission with respect to tourism related projects.

Ms. Haines solicited volunteers to set up/break down the luminaries for the December 8th Village Stroll and reviewed several of the events that would take place that night. She advised that the wreaths have been installed on the light poles in Moodus and that the fundraising for that program has gone well.

Mr. Smith suggested having Eversource install flag brackets on the light poles in Town which would facilitate other special events' decorations. There was a general discussion about including the Village in the request. Mr. Lyman noted that the Town has added some holiday decorations to the Village area. Ms. Smith suggested a more formal fundraising program for holiday decorations.

- B. Proposed expansion of the industrial area in the IG zone – Mr. Casner reported that Shagbark has been working with the Planning & Zoning Commission regarding their request to expand the industrial area in the IG zone and that P&Z appears receptive to their request. He advised that, if their request is approved, Shagbark would like to build 10,000 sf of commercial incubator space on their property. Mr. Casner noted that Shagbark also plans to add 5000 sf to their existing building. He encouraged the Commissioners to attend future P&Z meetings to support Shagbark's request.
- C. Chatham Health – Mr. Casner stated that the joint EDC/BOS meeting regarding Chatham Health went well and he distributed a draft of a follow-up letter for the Commissioners' review.
 - a. Establish an Oversight Review Committee – Mr. Casner reported that the decision, after conferring the First Selectman, had been made to stay with CHD and work with them to improve their service to the Town. He noted that the Chairman of CHD is receptive to their concerns so Mr. Casner recommended setting up an oversight committee, for a 6-month evaluation period, to review and communicate problems and concerns to CHD. Ms. Smith agreed that establishing an oversight committee for a 6-month period provided EDC with a way to measure whether or not CHD is making improvements.

There was a general discussion regarding whether or not an oversight committee would be effective. The Commissioners discussed how the committee would know if problems were continuing or if improvements had been made. Mr. Casner and Ms. Smith pointed out that the EDC became aware of the existing problems through "word-of-mouth" and they expected the committee would be able to determine if CHD had acted on their promises to improve their services in the same way.

The Commissioners discussed some of the problems that need to be addressed and how to structure measurable goals for the oversight committee to use in evaluating CHD. They agreed that it would be useful to have CHD provide the Town with a written plan of action for going forward and Mr. Smith recommended the Town or CHD send out a follow-up survey after each appointment to help determine if CHD is improving their services.

Mr. Casner, Ms. Smith, Mr. Fennema, and Zac Jezek volunteered to work on the CHD Oversight Review sub-Committee.

- D. Plan of Conservation & Development – Mr. Casner reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission will be working on the updates to the Plan of Conservation & Development for several months. He noted that EDC had updated their section within the past two-years and the stated goals and objectives are still current but may need some minor updating.

He briefly discussed the proposed development of the Goodspeed Landing area, the need for a master plan for that area, and opportunities for business growth in the Moodus and Four-Corners areas. The Commissioners discussed P&Z's proposal to research grants to extend the sewer line to the Four-Corners area.

- E. Business of the Month –January 2019 Nominations and Vote – Ms. Smith listed the businesses under discussion for a Business of the Month nomination. She reported that she and Mr. Casner had discussed posthumously recognize Jack Herman's long-standing commitment to the community through naming Nathan Hale Pharmacy as the Business of the Month.

MOTION MADE BY MR. FENNEMA, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO NAME NATHAN HALE PHARMACY AS EDC'S JANUARY 2019 BUSINESS OF THE MONTH. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Casner reported that he had discussed dedicating a bench at Heritage Park in honor of Jack Herman with the First Selectmen. He noted that he will talk with the Business Association about participating with EDC in the project. The Commissioners supported his proposal.

Ms. Smith reported that she is continuing to get quotes on producing a new business welcome sign.

5. New Business

- A. Building Department – Mr. Casner reported that he has gotten a good deal of feedback regarding concerns about the Building Inspector's availability. Mr. Lyman advised that he is aware of the concerns and he has been discussing them with the Building Inspector. He stated that he expects that no later than this spring, the Town will fill a 25-30 hour position to replace the part-time Building Inspector. In response to a request from Mr. Casner, Mr. Lyman agreed to provide an updated status report on this agenda item at the next EDC meeting.
- B. Transfer Station – Mr. Casner reported that the Board of Selectmen have had extensive discussions on the Transfer Station Committee's recommendations and asked Mr. Lyman to provide an update on the status of the recommendations.

Mr. Lyman advised that currently, the back of the trash hopper is closed due to unsafe conditions and there is a plan for reversing the flow of traffic that should address the problems with trash not getting weighed and stickers not being checked. He also noted that he is going to write a series of articles about going to a bag system and the most economical way to operate the Transfer Station.

Mr. Lyman stated that, by ordinance, the local haulers have the right to use the hopper, however, both businesses have agreed to discontinue use of the hopper if the Town goes to the bag system. In response to

a concern raised by Mr. Casner, Mr. Lyman confirmed that the local haulers are on-board with the Town's plans. Mr. Casner stated he will follow-up with the haulers to ensure they are comfortable with what the Town is proposing.

Mr. Lyman briefly addressed newly developed problems with processing plastic recyclables and noted that no one yet knows how that issue is going to be resolved.

- C. Appoint Regular member to commission – Mr. Casner recommended changing Irene Haines' status to a regular member of the board.

MOTION MADE BY MR. FENNEMA, SECONDED BY MR. ALBUQUERQUE, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT IRENE HAINES BE APPOINTED AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

6. Public Comment – The following public comment was discussed at the meeting:

- Rob Smith stated that the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed organization received a National Parks Service grant for mapping recreational areas and coordinating their efforts with tourism and business groups. He advised that the mapping will cover the Eightmile River area and large sections of the surrounding towns and, in addition to mapping trails, it will identify where local tourism related businesses are located. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Casner, Mr. Smith advised that the Eightmile River organization would get in touch with EDC and the East Haddam Business Association regarding the Eightmile River mapping project.

7. Adjournment

Mr. Casner also reported that in 2019 the State of CT will be repaving Route 82 from the Four-Corners section to Hadlyme.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. BERGERON, SECONDED BY MS. SMITH, TO ADJOURN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler