

East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee (VRC) Meeting  
Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Minutes

DRAFT

Committee Members Present: Bill Gerrish (Chairman), J.T. Smith, Bob Casner, Mark Walter (arrived 8:20 pm), Randy Dill, Jim Curtin, Will Brady

Others in Attendance: Emmett Lyman, Jim Ventres, Irene Haines, Rob Smith, Susan Link, Tracy Gionta, David Nelson, Jeff Riley

Absent: Mike Gionta, Melanie Kolek

Mr. Gerrish called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm. He appointed J.T. Smith to replace Melanie Kolek as a voting member. Mr. Smith agreed to serve as Secretary in Ms. Kolek's absence.

Approval of agenda

MOTION

CARRIED

Curtin/Casner

Mr. Casner noted that his comments reflected in the 1/24 minutes referred to the EDC rather than the P&Z.

Approval of minutes from January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting with noted changes

MOTION

CARRIED

Curtin/Casner

First Selectman Update

First Selectman Lyman noted that he submitted Rob Smith's traffic design to RiverCOG for their review. He noted that Sam Golf is the East Haddam staff member who works with RiverCOG.

Mr. Lyman noted that he, Mr. Gerrish and Mr. Casner met with representatives of the Goodspeed concerning the Town property and future of the village. He noted that the Goodspeed expressed continued interest in the property, though no specific proposals were expressed. Mr. Lyman said that any proposal would need to be a tax-paying property (housing, office, office space) and 51% of the town must approve it.

Mr. Lyman stated that the RFP is expected to be ready within the next two weeks for Phase I, II, and III testing of the property.

Mr. Lyman said that the Town is developing an RFP for the town property, which will seek proposals to develop the site. Mr. Smith stated that he feels contractors/businesses/etc will be hesitant to "freely" offer up ideas for the property.

New Business

#### Village Concept Presentation – Jim Ventres, East Haddam Land Use Administrator

Mr. Ventres presented a historical overview of village studies, including the Fuss & O’Neill mobility study (90% completed) and the Fellner project.

Mr. Ventres suggested one route to take in approaching this project would be to “sell the property for \$1 and bond the project 150% to be completed within 3 years. This approach would place the incentive on the contractor.” He noted that a walkway along the river to Chapman’s Pond could be continued all the way to Gillette’s Castle with only three property easements.

In terms of construction on the property, he said there is a waiver that allows building height to match surrounding buildings (approx. 95’ above sea level or roughly 3.5 stories). He said that the daily traffic count across the bridge is 10,600 vehicles/day. Mr. Ventres will provide the committee with a write-up for a \$3 million grant proposal done in the 2000s. Mr. Casner and Mr. Ventres agreed that some sort of mixed use, retail/condos, is practical for the property. Mr. Ventres said he was fairly confident that the soil beneath the garage is clean. In terms of relocating the road, the DOT’s only involvement would be approving a permit for road relocation. The work would be up to the town/investor.

#### Village Concept Presentation – Jim Curtin, East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee member

Mr. Curtin provided a site plan that shows there is a bottleneck right off the bridge and up the road near the town green. A solution would be to pull the road back 10 feet into the north slope just off the bridge and take a few feet on the south side up the road a bit. He stated it would make sense to clear an area in front of the Town Office Building and bring the ground to grade to lengthen the site lines.

Mr. Curtin believes that a tavern/pub would be suitable for the River House. He also stated that we could remove the rock cut to improve the view and potentially create boat access in the old Quarry location just north of the bridge. In order to access the site we would need a right of way just north of the Bogan property, which could connect to the northeast corner of the site.

#### Village Concept Presentation – JT Smith, East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee Member

Mr. Smith presented a grand masterplan that involved:

- Realignment of Route 82 directly through the site
- Creation of ample parking and green space in front of the Goodspeed and Gelston House
- Swapping the town’s property with the Goodspeed’s riverfront parking lot
  - Developing and potentially selling that property for high \$\$\$

Mr. Dill noted that the Goodspeed’s riverfront parking lot is in a flood zone and may be difficult to develop. Mr. Ventres noted that it would be difficult to swap properties, however the town essentially gave the Goodspeed that riverfront property years ago.

#### Audience of Citizens

Historic District Commission chair David Chapman stated that the town office building is important to the historic district. He would be supportive of relocating the town office building back into alignment with La Vita. He would love to see a plan that rebuilds the Goodspeed Mansion, which he feels would be historically important to the Village

Several audience members provided comment, supporting some sort of combination of the three presentations.

Adjournment

MOTION

CARRIED

Curtin/Casner at 9:10 pm.

Next meeting March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm at the Grange Hall.