

**East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee**  
**August 22, 2018**  
**DRAFT Minutes**

Members Present; William Gerrish (chair), Melanie Kolek, Bob Casner, Jim Curtin, Randy Dill, Will Brady. Absent: Mark Walter

Audience: Ed Blaschik, Irene Haines, Donald Donner, Steven Rossi, Chris Miller

Mr. Smith was seated as a full voting member in place of Mr. Gionta.

**Call to order 7:32 pm**

**Agenda Approval:** Motion made by Mrs. Kolek; Seconded by Mr. Casner. Motion approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes (June 27, 2018):** Motion made by Mr. Casner; Seconded by Mr. Dill. Motion passed; Mrs. Kolek abstained.

**First Selectman Update**

Eagle Environmental conducted a comprehensive testing and survey of all three village area buildings and tentatively, their draft report indicates a \$125,000.00 environmental charge for clean-up. Mr. Lyman stated the town should be at a point to send out either an RFP/RFQ for the site. An example from another town was provided to the First Selectman. Mr. Lyman said that we are looking not only for the best deal but for the developer who is going to make the best use of the property. There was brief discussion regarding bonding of the property as we do not want to end up with an eye-sore if a developer runs out of money. He advised that in conjunction with the town's application for the TIGER grant, the town should consider any remediation or renovations to the property with a developer.

Mr. Brady asked about the value of the property, and Mr. Lyman advised that the previously obtained value is relatively old and out of date.

**Reviews of EHVRC charge and work to date**

Mr. Gerrish reviewed and discussed the committee's charge.

**Action steps and timeline**

Mr. Lyman mentioned that he wants a team effort. Mr. Gerrish agreed that it is time to go forward with an RFP and the committee must be involved with that. There was discussion regarding "top shelf items" and those should be agreed upon by the committee before moving forward to give parameters for potential developers. Mr. Lyman stated that we should be open as we can, and Mr. Casner agreed. Mr. Casner believes potential developers will be geared toward entertainment.

Mr. Dill advised that we have not gotten the recent input of residents and we should have a clearer idea of that before the committee proceeds. Mr. Lyman advised that this will go to referendum, and Mr. Curtin advised that we should get public input as well.

### **Recommendations to Board of Selectmen for actions to advance village revitalization**

Mr. Gerrish stated that he is pleased that the town wants to solicit bids for development. One of the themes of the meetings the committee has had in the last year has been town feedback. Has the committee done enough outreach? Has the committee answered the questions that need to be answered? Do these requests and concerns get placed in the RFP or does the committee wait to get the bid back?

Mrs. Kolek questioned whether there should be a town forum for citizens to come and discuss their desires. Mr. Casner also stated that a town forum would be helpful to determine what the key issues are for the village revitalization. There was discussion regarding drafting an RFP in advance of that, then finalizing it thereafter. Mr. Curtin suggested that we can invite citizens to a forum but also give the opportunity to submit written comments to the committee.

Mr. Dill asked Mr. Curtin regarding the conservation development survey. That information will be forthcoming and could be instructive for the committee.

Motion by Mr. Dill, second by Mr. Casner for a legal notice and editorial drafted by the chair to be placed in the East Haddam News for a town forum at the committee's next scheduled meeting and solicit citizen comments in writing related thereto. Motion passed.

Mr. Gerrish inquired about how the RFP will be publicized and casting a wide net for the same.

Mr. Smith questioned at what point we can put a for sale/lease sign on the property. Mr. Casner moved, and Mrs. Kolek seconded, that once the environmental report is finalized, the First Selectman's office should explore putting a "for sale or lease" sign on the property and to consult with the town attorney for that issue as needed. Mr. Brady voted no. Motion passed.

### **Audience of Citizens**

Mr. Donner presented and discussed concept photos and drawings for the "River Landing" project.

Mr. Rossi questioned the difference between the sale and lease and what is the ultimate goal to be achieved. Tax revenue? Access? Raised was a question of whether an RFP can be put out without an objective. There was discussion about the town's response to an RFP and efforts made by the committee to date to narrow that objective.

Mrs. Haines said that the conservation survey will be instructive on this. Park and Recreation had a question on an old survey about businesses in town, and she advised the committee to look at this.

There was further discussion regarding whether the property should be sold or leased, and whether the town should be made property managers. Mr. Brady pointed out there are other leasers of property in town. Mr. Donner said that leasing the property would limit developers and there was discussion that either the town puts up the money for the development and leases it, or the developers buy it and improve it themselves. Mr. Lyman does not believe that the town people would support money for development before leasing.

**Adjournment 8:35 p.m.**

Mr. Casner made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Curtin. Motion passed unanimously.