

East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee
October 24, 2018
DRAFT Minutes

Members Present; William Gerrish (chair), Melanie Kolek, Jim Curtin, Bob Casner, Emmett Lyman, J.T. Smith; Randy Dill, Mark Walter, Will Brady

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

Call to order 7:33 pm

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

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes (September 26, 2018) Motion made by Mr. Casner; second by Mr. Curtin.
Motion carried, Mr. Dill abstained.

First Selectman Update

Mr. Lyman that a draft RFP had been created and would be circulated to the committee. He also advised that the town had contacted a vendor to write a brownfield remediation grant as the state is offering up to \$1 million to towns for clean-up projects such as these. Arsenic testing is continuing.

Review of Citizen Forum

Mr. Gerrish thought it was a great meeting; citizens clearly expressed how meaningful this property is to them. People had differing thoughts and ideas but common thread was that it was the town's crown jewel.

Mr. Casner agreed, stating many good ideas were shared including options of lease, sale and gifting. He stated an RFP has to open and broad enough to consider all ideas. He stated that drawing a younger demographic to the property is important.

Mr. Brady stated at the last Historic District Commission (HDC) meeting, there were several recommendations made about the property to be considered as part of the RFP, including considerations for traffic, public access and structures, in particular that the old town office and Riverhouse be preserved for their historical importance. HDC previously advised and continues to have no objection to the old town garage being taken down. If a developer thought it was feasible to move the old town office building back some, that may help would traffic and feasibility.

Mrs. Kolek stated of the comments made, attracting youth and young professionals to stay in town for dinner or night out was important. Mr. Curtin echoed similar comments about the comments made by and about young professionals, stating that a brewery spreads the age demographic. Mr. Curtin also agreed with Mr. Casner regarding keeping the RFP broad.

Mr. Walter mentioned that amount of acreage of land that this town owns is small but whole town could be amazing if town expanded, questioning if there may be the opportunity for negotiations of surrounding towns. Mr. Gerrish mentioned exploring joint ventures. Previously we focused on

what we owned, which was enough for a small project. Mr. Walters also stated the Riverhouse is in bad shape and needs to be gutted. Public access to the river is important. Mr. Walter said that it might be helpful to have committees invested in these ideas before an RFP is sent.

Mr. Dill said that public comments at the last meeting were much of what we heard before, which allows the town to open up the RFP in its expansiveness.

Vision Statement

Mr. Casner mentioned that the access and parking will definitely need to be addressed in the RFP will have to address this.

Mr. Walter said that the committee needs to make a list of key property owners in the area. He further stated that the dock is key for expansion down to the waterfront.

Mr. Gerrish asked for volunteers to revise the vision statement. Mr. Smith volunteered and said the committee will need to make clear for the developers how the town votes on the property. There was discussion about how the town would choose a developer/project to put forward.

Draft RFP

There was discussion about whether a developer would want to come up with a master plan.

Mr. Curtain said we would expect these following questions answered by or for a developer:

- Joint parking accommodations
- Public access
- Bathroom access
- A clear and concise town process

There was discussion about the draft RFP. Mr. Gerrish said the commissioner has been tasked with making recommendations, and asked for volunteers to form a small working group to look at it carefully.

CT Main Street Center

First Selectman Lyman said Board agreed to go forward with this affiliation pending recommendation by the committee.

Motion by Mrs. Kolek: Committee recommends to Board of Selectman to move forward with town affiliation with the CT Main Street Center; seconded by Mr. Brady.

Motion carried.

Mr. Dill asked about whether developers should come here first. Mr. Gerrish said it could be important as to how we solicit proposals. There was discussion about putting out the RFP regarding the clean-up. EDC and First Selectman have not made this decision. Mr. Gerrish said he believes that CT Main Street Center may agree to review the RFP.

Audience of Citizens

Jeff Reilly of Centerbrook Architects stated he cannot recall a project where a developer has agreed to handle an open ended remediation project. He recommended that the town consider first an RFQ versus an RFP. Based on receipt of RFQs, the committee could pick a developer to do a comprehensive plan including focus on financial viability.

Once a developer is selected, a plan is developed and then approved by a town, the developer will want to make sure they have a central committee who they deal with, e.g. a building committee.

Mr. Brady asked about how this information would be approved by various committees; first round of P&Z has to happen. Mr. Smith said that the issue raised regarding the RFQ and RFP needs to be addressed first.

Adjournment 8:38 p.m.

Mr. Casner made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Brady.

Motion carried.