

**East Haddam Economic Development Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2019**

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

Guests: C. Bihilo; A. Jansky; J. Jansky, M. Robidoux; S. Smith; S. Wheeler

1. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.
2. Attendance – Mr. Casner noted that there was a quorum of regular Commissioners.
3. Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting – January 3, 2019

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 7, 2019.

MOTION MADE BY MR. PARADY, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 3, 2019 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Regular Meeting – February 7, 2019

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 3, 2019 and Mr. Casner noted one typographical error.

MOTION MADE BY MS. HAINES, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 7, 2019 AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

4. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update

- a. Goodspeed Landing—Old Town Office Site – Mr. Casner advised that the RFQ had been released and Ms. Haines reviewed the timeline for the responses. She stated that the RFQ required a mandatory site visit to the property by March 29th and final submissions are due May 16th. She noted that a Town Hearing to approve the developer is anticipated for January 2020.

Ms. Haines stated that she expected developers will expect the site to have had any contamination remediation completed. She also said that the property and buildings should be maintained in the best shape possible, both for the potential developers' mandatory site visit and because it is the gateway to the Town. She also recommended the Town make the site available for short-duration events.

MOTION MADE BY MS. HAINES, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT THE FACILITIES DIRECTOR ARRANGE TO HAVE THE OLD TOWN OFFICE SITE BUILDINGS CLEARED OUT AND BROOM CLEANED AND THE GROUNDS TIDIED UP. FURTHER, THAT THE SITE BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FOR SHORT-DURATION EVENTS. UNANIMOUS AYE.

2. First Selectman Update

Mr. Lyman was not in attendance at the meeting and Mr. Casner reviewed the agenda items under the First Selectman Update.

- a. Building Department – Mr. Casner reported that the First Selectman had interviewed several candidates for the fulltime Building Official and the new hire will start in April.
- b. Transfer Station – Mr. Casner briefly reviewed the history of several Transfer Station Committees and the recommendations of the most recent committee. He stated that he feels that the proposals to changes in the operations of the Transfer Station made by the Board of Selectmen are not sufficiently well-defined. He noted that, if the original parameters of who could use the Transfer Station was voted on in a Town Meeting, it would be necessary for the residents to vote again to amend the original vote.

The Commissioners discussed whether or not the Board of Selectmen had the authority to make all of the proposed changes to the operations of the Transfer Station without a Town vote. Ms. Smith noted that the final report of the Transfer Station Committee, including their recommendation, states, “... *the Connecticut Municipal Leaders Manual, clearly states the Board of Selectmen ‘makes policy decisions’ (Part 5-2, Section C). Should the Selectmen wish to implement this recommendation, it is their exclusive right under the General Statutes to do so.*”

Mr. Casner opened the meeting up to comments from the audience. Ms. Jansky and Mr. Bihilo stated that their support of the changes to the operation of the Transfer Station had been contingent on a Town vote approving the changes. There was a general discussion regarding the impact of the proposal to exclude all “commercial” use of the Transfer Station. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Casner, the Janskys and Mr. Bihilo confirmed that they could support town-wide trash pick-up. Mr. Jansky and Mr. Bihilo stated that it would be important to their businesses that, when the Town negotiates its solid waste contract with the Willimantic transfer facility, that the local haulers be included as users of the facility at the same fee as the Town’s fee.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Smith, it was confirmed that the Transfer Station Committee is no longer meeting. The Commissioners reviewed the Town’s ordinance related to the use of, and restrictions on the use of the Transfer Station. Ms. Smith agreed to research the Town Meeting records relative to any vote on the use of the Transfer Station and the Town ordinances related to the Transfer Station.

- c. Update on Chatham Health District – Ms. Smith distributed a report with the annual statistics related to fees that were charged to East Haddam residents and businesses. The Commissioners reviewed the report and noted several instances of duplicate fees they felt were unnecessary.

Ms. Smith stated that CHD has offered to facilitate educational programs for Town employees and businesses; however, the Commissioners agreed that the immediate focus should be on improving customer service and revisions to the fee structure.

Ms. Smith recommended inviting the new Director to the May EDC meeting. There was a general discussion regarding the appropriate role for EDC to play in the oversight of CHD’s services to the Town.

3. Economic Development Administrator Report

- a. Available Commercial Properties – Ms. Smith distributed a list of available commercial properties and stated that they would be posted on the EDC website. She confirmed that she would maintain the list and update it as needed. Ms. Haines recommended adding a “SOLD” watermark to applicable properties before they are moved off the list.

MOTION MADE BY MS. HAINES, SECONDED BY MR. FENNEMA, TO POST A LIST OF AVAILABLE COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION’S WEBSITE AND AUTHORIZE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATOR TO MAINTAIN UPDATES TO THE POSTING. UNANIMOUS AYE.

- b. EDC Banner – Ms. Smith displayed a new business welcome banner that EDC had purchased. She noted that there are two banners that new businesses can check-out from EDC for 30-day periods.
- c. Website Update – Ms. Smith reported that she has made several revisions to the EDC website and reviewed the updates.

Ms. Smith also reported on the following:

- She distributed fliers she had made-up to fundraise for the Jack Herman memorial bench and advised that Dutch Oil had made the first donation.
- She has tickets for the Small Business Day at the state capital and reviewed the logistics for those attending.
- She is having generic EDC business cards printed for the Commissioners use.
- In support of the Town’s sustainability commitment, she displayed a sample of a portable composter that could complement the Transfer Station’s proposed bag system.

4. Tourism Committee

- a. Fall Celebration – Columbus Day Weekend – Ms. Smith stated that she is co-chairing the Fall Celebration event with Mr. Robidoux and reviewed details of the event.
- b. Make Music – CT – Ms. Smith reviewed the origins of Make Music and stated that CT had initiated its first Make Music celebration last year. She stated that the celebration is held on the summer solstice and musicians and venues sign-up for performances throughout the day. She advised that there is no charge to any of the participants or the public to attend the performances.

Ms. Smith stated that several East Haddam businesses have already signed up for the Make Music event and she is working with Ms. Mathiasen to make sure the Town is included in the correct region for marketing purposes.

- c. Update on Visitors Guide – Ms. Smith reported that she continues to note changes that must be made to the Visitors Guide for the next printing. She stated that two local farms have offered to distribute the guides at the next annual Flower Show in Hartford.

- B. Proposed expansion of the industrial area in the IG zone – Mr. Casner advised that work on Shagbark’s addition is moving forward and the Commissioners discussed the planned use for the space. Mr. Casner reiterated that Shagbark would appreciate the EDC Commissioners’ support at any Planning & Zoning Commission meetings when their proposal is on the agenda.

Mr. Casner also reported that Scully Landscaping is clearing a site in the area for a new building.

- C. Chatham Health Oversight Review Committee – There was no additional discussion on this agenda item.
- D. Plan of Conservation & Development – Mr. Casner reported that the P&Z Commission advised they expect a draft of the new Plan of Conservation & Development from the consultants soon. He stated that the Commissioners will have an opportunity to review the section on Economic Development when the draft is released.
- E. Business of the Month – March 2019 Nominations and Vote – Ms. Smith made several suggestions for April’s Business of the Month and the Commissioners discussed her recommendations.

MOTION MADE BY MS. HAINES, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO NAME ANDERSON’S SUGARHOUSE AS EDC’S APRIL 2019 BUSINESS OF THE MONTH. UNANIMOUS AYE.

5. New Business

- A. Review Tax Incentive Program – Ms. Smith distributed copies of the Town’s Tax Incentive Program and encouraged the Commissioners to familiarize themselves with the program. Mr. Casner noted that First Selectmen Lyman requested EDC look into enhancing the program. Mr. Casner requested the Commissioners review the details of the Tax Incentive plan so they can discuss possible improvements at their next meeting.
- B. Request to Establish a Farm Tax Abatement Program – Ms. Smith distributed copies of the CT Department of Agriculture’s informational sheet related to Laws Pertaining to Agricultural Property Tax Exemptions and Abatements. She stated Mr. Staehly had requested she look into setting up a municipal tax abatement program for East Haddam agricultural businesses.
- C. Vision/Mission Statement – This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.

- 6. Public Comment – Ms. Wheeler advised that she had referred Parks and Rec Director Conroy to Ms. Smith for assistance in creating a program for the Music on the River event.

Ms. Smith stated that Ms. Wheeler had stated she would be available to work on additional writing projects and grants.

7. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:29 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,
Sharon Wheeler