

**East Haddam Economic Development Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 4, 2019**

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

Guests: E. Lyman; S. Smith; C. Staehly; K. Staehly; S. Wheeler

1. Call to Order - Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
2. Attendance – Mr. Casner noted that there was a quorum of regular Commissioners.
3. Approval of Minutes

**Regular Meeting – March 7, 2019**

The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 7, 2019 and noted several revisions.

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

4. Old Business

A. Status Reports

1. EDC Chairman Update

Mr. Casner reported that he has been participating in meetings with the local haulers regarding the impact on them of the proposed changes at the Transfer Station. He stated that Mr. Lyman is chairing those meetings, that they have been having good discussions and he is hopeful they will find solutions to the haulers' concerns.

- A. Goodspeed Landing – Ms. Smith reviewed a letter she drafted to the Board of Selectmen concerning on-going maintenance and possible use of the grounds at the old Town Office Site. Mr. Lyman noted that the buildings are being cleaned every two weeks and the grounds are also maintained on a regular basis. He noted that it would be possible to use the grounds from time-to-time for outdoor events but that the use must be pre-approved, on a case-by-case basis, by the Board of Selectmen.

There was a brief discussion regarding the mandatory site visit by potential developers and, in response to a question raised by Mr. Parady, Mr. Lyman advised that the RFQ does not specify whether the Town will sell or lease the property.

2. First Selectman Update

- a. Building Department – Mr. Lyman reported that William Thody will begin work as the Town's new Building Official on April 8th. He will work a 35-hour week and have regular office and inspection hours.

- b. Transfer Station – Mr. Lyman distributed copies of a draft news release regarding revisions to the traffic flow at the Transfer Station and requested the Commissioners provide him with any feedback after they have had a chance to review the draft.

Mr. Lyman also reported that Chatham Health District has hired Russell Melmed as their new director and he will begin work on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Smith noted that she has seen an improvement in the communications with Chatham Health.

- 3. Economic Development Administrator Report – Ms. Smith reviewed her monthly activities report. She noted that Ms. Zemienski had been instrumental in helping her update the EDC web pages.
- 4. Tourism Committee – Ms. Smith reviewed several tourism related topics in her earlier report. She noted that EDC will have a booth at the upcoming Celebrate East Haddam event and requested volunteers to staff the booth.
- B. Proposed expansion of the industrial area in the IG zone – Mr. Casner reported that Shagbark is moving forward with their building expansion and incubator space projects. Mr. Casner encouraged the Commissioners' to attend any Planning & Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission meetings when the Shagbark proposals are on the agenda.
- C. Chatham Health Oversight Review Committee – This topic was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the above minutes.
- D. Plan of Conservation & Development – There was no new update on this agenda item.
- E. Business of the Month – May 2019 Nominations and Vote – Ms. Smith made several suggestions for May's Business of the Month and the Commissioners discussed her recommendations.

MOTION MADE BY MR. FENNEMA, SECONDED BY MS. HAINES, TO NAME LIBERTY BANK AS EDC'S MAY 2019 BUSINESS OF THE MONTH. UNANIMOUS AYE.

## 5. New Business

- A. Review Tax Incentive Program – Mr. Casner stated that he is reviewing the existing Tax Incentive Program and will provide any recommendations to improve/streamline the program at a future meeting. There was a brief discussion regarding why there isn't more interest in the program.
- B. Farm Tax Abatement Program – Ms. Smith summarized the CT Department of Agriculture's ordinance Pertaining to Agricultural Property Tax Exemptions and Abatements and reviewed the research she has done regarding the Staehly's request to have East Haddam adopt the ordinance. Messrs. Kevin and Christopher Staehly reviewed several benefits of the program to both the farm owners and the Town. Ms. Smith reported that the exemption is capped at \$100k on buildings that are used exclusively for agriculture. She noted that she had estimated the tax abatement that the Staehly's would receive and it was minimal. Mr. K. Staehly noted that, even though their abatement would be a relatively small amount, he feels it would be meaningful.

The Commissioners discussed the proposal and agreed to support the Staehly's request. Mr. Casner and Ms. Smith agreed to draft a letter to the Board of Selectmen supporting a proposal that the Town adopt the state ordinance Pertaining to Agricultural Property Tax Exemptions and Abatements.

- C. Swingbridge Repair Schedule & Toll Proposal – Mr. Casner reported that Shagbark had requested EDC arrange a meeting with Sen. Needleman and Rep. Haines to discuss their concerns about delays on crossing the Swingbridge while it is being repaired and the state's highway toll proposal.

Ms. Haines reported on the current status of the state's toll proposal and noted there are not yet enough votes to get the proposal passed. She stated that she is meeting with representatives of the Department of Transportation on April 8<sup>th</sup> and will discuss concerns about delays on the Swingbridge during their construction work. Ms. Haines agreed to follow-up with Shagbark regarding their concerns.

- D. Establish a Sub-Committee to Research Feasibility of Creation of a Business District on lower Town Street (Route 82) – The Commissioners reviewed maps of the three business districts in Town. Mr. Casner noted that the Town's business tax base is low relative to the surrounding towns and there is limited space to expand. He noted that there are currently a number of businesses on lower Town Street and stated he would like EDC to partner with members of the Planning & Zoning Commission to create a sub-committee to investigate the feasibility of creating a new business district in that area.

Mr. Fennema, Ms. Haines, and Mr. Robidoux volunteered to participate on the sub-committee with Mr. Casner and members of P&Z.

- E. Vision/Mission Statement – Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

6. Public Comment – In response to a question raised by Mr. Lyman, Mr. K. Staehly stated that he had completed an application for the Tax Incentive Plan and he did not think it was an excessive amount of paperwork.

7. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Recorded

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sharon Wheeler