

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2011**

Attending: R. Casner, M. Gionta, D. Mathiasen, E. Odell, P. Rubenbauer, G. Rucker; P. Stricker, M. Ziobron (EDC Coordinator)

Absent: J. Albuquerque, R. Parady

Guests: H. Kittner, D. McMahon, R. Pettinelli, M. Walter (arrived 9:10 p.m.)

Ms. Stricker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked that Ms. Rubenbauer stand-in for Mr. Albuquerque for this meeting.

MINUTES

MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. ODELL, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 3, 2011 EDC MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN. MR. CASNER AND MR. GIONTA ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE. MOTION PASSED BY A MAJORITY OF AYES.

OLD BUSINESS

Status Reports:

Goodspeed Properties

Ms. Kittner reported that the Creamery Road houses were just about finished and offered to tour the Commissioners through them before their April meeting. The Commissioners agreed to meet at the Creamery Road location at 6:30 p.m. on April 7th for the tour.

Ms. Stricker invited Ms. Kittner and Mr. McMahon to stay for Mr. Pettinelli's presentation on the plans for three crosswalks in the Village. She introduced Mr. Pettinelli who advised that he is a member of Fuss & O'Neil and had worked on the original Mobility Study that resulted in the grant for the crosswalks. He reviewed the preliminary design plans and advised that they still have to be reviewed and approved by the CT Department of Transportation.

Ms. Kittner expressed some concerns about the impact on handicapped parking at the Gelson House during the work and the group also discussed the impact the proposed construction detours will have on traffic. There was a general discussion about the DOT's planned work on the Succor Brook bridges and Ms. Ziobron advised that the MidState Regional Planning group voted to approve the bridge work for 2012. She suggested inviting the DOT to an upcoming EDC meeting to discuss the project.

Economic Development Coordinator – Ms. Ziobron reported on the following items:

- She and First Selectman Walter will attend a meeting regarding the planned DOT work on the Arrigoni Bridge. The project is projected to take 2 years.
- The Lyme Ferry is presently funded in Gov. Malloy's budget.
- The East Haddam Brewery application is on Planning & Zoning's March 22nd meeting agenda. Ms. Ziobron reviewed the plans for the brewery and noted that the owner has invited neighbors to meet with him at the Gelston House on the day of the Chowder Festival to discuss any issues or concerns.
- She has been working with the owner of Overland Experts to find a suitable site for training exercise. She noted that there is nothing in East Haddam that fits his needs so she referred him to the town of Salem.
- She is assisting the East Haddam Stage Company in applying for a grant to fund its productions at Gillette Castle this summer.
- She will be attending the Business Day at the State Capital on March 9th.
- The Town's Building Official sent a Notice of Unsafe Conditions to the owners of the laundromat on Route 149. She distributed a copy of the Notice and stated that she met with the owner and discussed the situation.
- Gristmill will be installing instant DVD machines in its two stores.
- She met with a resident who would like to open a bait & tackle shop on Clark Gates Road.

Ms. Ziobron also reported that the Gateway Commission met on February 28th and it is her understanding that Sen. Daily will re-introduce legislation for the land-swap in Haddam. She stated that she does not know if it includes the Goodspeed or any East Haddam property. At the request of the Commissioners, she agreed to call Sen. Daily and request a copy of the proposed bill. She noted that a public hearing on the bill is scheduled for March 14th and suggested the Commissioners also consider inviting Mr. Rocco to meet with EDC and the Board of Selectmen prior to the 14th so that he can provide them with an overview of his plans.

First Selectman's Report – Since Mr. Walter was not in attendance at this point in the meeting, the Commissioners agreed to defer this agenda item.

Signage Regulations – Mr. Casner reported that the draft signage regulations have been finalized and he expects the item to be on the agenda for the next Planning & Zoning Commission's meeting. He stated that the main item of contention is interior lit signs.

Campground Regulations – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the new Campground Regulations were approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission and will go into effect on April 1st. Ms. Ziobron stated that Mr. Gustine and Mr. Nedovich are very pleased with the new regulations and that Mr. Nedovich had sent a note of thanks to the P&Z Commissioners.

East Haddam Village Revitalization Commission – Mr. Gionta reported that the Commission did not meet in February so there was no updated information to provide.

East Haddam Business Association – Ms. Mathiasen reported that Ms. Pagnano had informed her that the Business Association had received a good response to its letter to Town businesses inviting them to join the Association and/or participate in the March Business Expo. Ms. Mathiasen stated that ECD had assisted with the mailing and the postage had cost \$132.00. The Commissioners discussed underwriting the cost of a vinyl banner and 2-sided tent sign for the Business Association.

MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. GIONTA, TO PAY \$132.00 FOR POSTAGE FOR THE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION'S FEBRUARY MAILING AND UNDERWRITE THE COST OF A RE-USABLE VINYL BANNER (ESTIMATED AT \$50.00) AND 2-SIDED RE-USABLE TENT SIGN (ESTIMATED AT \$60.00) FOR THE EAST HADDAM BUSINESS ASSOCIATION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Ziobron suggested donating the EDC ad-space in the next Events Magazine to the Business Association. There was a general discussion about the level of financial support EDC should provide to the Association and the Commissioners agreed to monitor EDC's contributions on an on-going basis.

Vacant Properties – Ms. Stricker advised that she is waiting to hear back from Mr. Brownell, Chairman of P&Z, to schedule a meeting to discuss this topic. There was general discussion and a consensus that several P&Z Commissioners have indicated informal support of moving forward to develop a program to pro-actively manage/market the Town's available commercial properties. Mr. Casner, Ms. Stricker, and Mr. Rucker volunteered to work on this project and agreed on an initial meeting date and time of March 16th at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Casner agreed to extend an invitation to Mr. Brownell and two other representatives from P&Z.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – Mr. Casner provided some background on this agenda item for the new Commissioners. He stated that he feels that if the private sector in Moodus does not take any action on a remedy for its septic limitations, the Town should consider reserving some property for that purpose. At the Commissioners' suggestion, Mr. Casner agreed to ask the Board of Selectmen if they would be willing to discuss the topic in an Executive Session at one of their upcoming meetings.

Goodspeed 2nd Theater – This item was covered earlier in the meeting during the discussion of the Haddam land-swap deal. Mr. Odell agreed to meet with Mr. Ventres to discuss potential locations for a second theatre for the Goodspeed. There was a general discussion regarding this agenda item and the Commissioners agreed to maintain their efforts to find a suitable location in East Haddam for the theatre and to continue to work with the Goodspeed toward a win-win solution; however, given the uncertainty of the Goodspeed's immediate plans for another theatre, they discussed whether or not it was useful to continue to carry the topic as a regular agenda item. No decision was made on whether or not to table this agenda item.

Sunrise – Ms. Stricker reported that the CT DEP has not completed its RFP for the park and, consequently, she does not anticipate any action will be taken on the property this year. Ms. Ziobron recommended ECD write a letter to the new DEP Commissioner to establish a relationship and to inquire about her plans for the park. Ms. Stricker agreed to draft the letter.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:

- Chowder Cook-off – Ms. Mathiasen reviewed the event's "to-do" list and solicited volunteers for various tasks. Ms. Ziobron advised that there are five confirmed participants. She stated that she would ask Ms. Melumilewski if the Sweet Shop would like to participate in some way at the event and, at Ms. Stricker's suggestion, she agreed to see if Bagels Plus would like to participate by donating bagel chips or another bread item for the chowder tables. Ms. Rubenbauer stated she would confirm whether or not the (Liquor Store) would do a wine tasting during the event.

The Commissioners discussed their interest in expanding the event and agreed that they would look to the Business Association for assistance in doing so.

- Review of Village Signage Options – Ms. Mathiasen distributed materials from the research she had done on sign/directory boards. She noted that the cost of the items she found on-line ran from \$180-\$500. Ms. Rubenbauer agreed to do additional research and make a recommendation to the Commissioners.
- On-Line Listing of Commercial Properties – Mr. Odell stated that the site for available commercial properties in Town has been created and there are currently five listings on it. He noted that there was a slight glitch with linking to the Century 21 website, but that he should be able to correct it.

First Selectman’s Report – Mr. Walter arrived at the meeting and provided the following report:

- He recently learned about the EB 5 program that matches foreign investors with U.S.cities. He stated that the investors must invest at least \$500,000 and create a minimum of 10 jobs. He stated that he would do some additional research on the program to see if it could be of any benefit to the Town.
- He reported on his discussions with Mr. Rocco concerning the Goodspeed’s future plans for another theatre.
- Ms. Ziobron will attend Board of Education’s Policy Sub-Committee meeting.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism (continued):

- Other / Content for Events Magazine – Mr. Odell advised that the deadline for all Events Magazine articles is March 11 and stated that he is working on a draft for EDC. Ms. Ziobron stated she would provide him with some topics for the article. Mr. Odell agreed to inform Ms. Pagnano of the deadline so that she could draft something for the Business Association.

NEW BUSINES

EDC Ordinance – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the Town has hired a firm to review its ordinances to see if they contain any gaps, overlaps, duplications, etc. She noted that one gap was noted in the EDC ordinance. She distributed copies of the ordinance and requested the Commissioners review the recommended correction so they could vote on it at the next meeting. She noted that they should do an overall review of the ordinance, particularly the Duties & Responsibilities section, since this would be a good time to recommend any other changes.

EDC Chair Responsibilities / Member Guidelines Draft / Interest in Chair – Ms. Mathiasen distributed copies of her draft of self-governing guidelines for the EDC Commissioners as well as a document listing the responsibilities of the EDC Chairperson. She noted that she and Ms. Stricker have been acting as the temporary Chairs for EDC; however, part of the new member interview process was to identify a new full-time Chairperson for the Commission. She advised that Mr. Odell had expressed interest in that role and encouraged any of the other new members to let the Board know if they also have an interest. She stated that filling the vacant Chair position will be discussed at the April ECD meeting.

Mail received – Ms. Mathiasen distributed an agenda for a special combined meeting of the Town’s P&Z and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission on March 29th. She noted that Atty. Branse will provide a presentation on the Land Use Law for CT Land Use Agencies. Mr. Casner advised that he might attend.

Public Comment/Other - There was no public comment at the meeting. Mr. Casner stated that the Commission seems to be out-growing the space in the River House and noted that, when the Goodspeed begins its season, parking becomes problematic. He suggested moving future meetings to the Grange. The Commissioners agreed with his recommendation and Ms. Mathiasen said she would research the availability of the Grange on the 1st Thursday of the month.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. GIONTA, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING, UNANIMOUS AYE.

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary