

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

Attending: R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; E. Odell; R. Parady; G. Rucker; P. Stricker
Absent: J. Albuquerque; M. Gionta; P. Rubenbauer
Guests: G. Clay (SBDC); D. Kroop (CEDAS)

Mr. Odell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and sat Mr. Parady for Mr. Gionta.

Guest Speakers

Mr. Odell welcomed the guest speakers to the meeting. Mr. Kroop introduced himself and provided his background which included 12 years as the Hamden Economic Development Coordinator and 2 years as President of the CT Economic Development Association (CEDAS). He provided an overview of the benefits of membership in CEDAS and responded to several questions from the Commissioners. Mr. Kroop stated that if the Commission decides to join CEDAS, the \$100 membership fee will cover the remainder of this year and 2012.

Ms. Clay introduced herself and stated that she had joined the CT Department of Economic and Community Development when she graduated from college and spent 20 years there before she left in 2007 to become the State Director of the CT Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). She reviewed the programs, training, and counseling SBDC offers and encouraged the Commissioners to provide local business owners with information about SBDC services they can take advantage of.

MS. MATHIASEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. RUCKER, FOR THE EAST HADDAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO JOIN THE CT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION FOR 2011/12 FOR A MEMBERSHIP FEE OF \$100.00. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Minutes – The Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the October 6, 2011 meeting. MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS WRITTEN. MS. STRICKER ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE SINCE SHE HAD NOT ATTENDED THE OCTOBER MEETING. MOTION PASSED WITH A MAJORITY OF AYES.

OLD BUSINESS

Status Reports:

Goodspeed Properties – Mr. Odell distributed invitations to the Commissioners for the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the new Actors' Housing.

Economic Development Coordinator – There was no Economic Development Coordinator to report at the meeting.

East Haddam Village Revitalization Commission – Mr. Odell stated that the RFQ has been out for several weeks; however, he had no information regarding responses. Ms. Mathiasen noted that it will be important to get the public's support of the project and stated that she will follow-up with the Commission and encourage them to schedule public information meetings after the municipal election. She agreed that the Town should partner with the developer for any public presentations and, therefore, the meetings should not be scheduled until a developer is selected.

First Selectman Update – There was no First Selectman's report given at the meeting.

East Haddam Business Association – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the Business Association's tag sale had been very successful. She advised that they had raised funds by selling booth space to approximately 50 vendors and that they had also collected donations for the Clothing and Food Banks. She stated that their next scheduled event is to host a Harvest House meal. Ms. Mathiasen noted that she will recommend that the board contact the SBDC to help identify speakers for the Association.

Vacant Property Options – Mr. Casner noted that it had been helpful partnering with the Planning & Zoning Commission regarding options for the re-use of vacant properties in Town. He and Ms. Stricker agreed; however, that as a result a number of complex issues had come to light concerning the Town's ability to market some of the sites as business locations. The Commissioners agreed to table this agenda item until a new Economic Development Coordinator is hired.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – Mr. Casner reported that he is prepared to discuss the Plains Road proposal with the Selectmen and stated that he will initiate the discussion after the upcoming election.

Sunrise – Ms. Stricker reported that the State’s Attorney has completed his review of the Request for Proposal for the Sunrise property and that the CT DEP is moving forward with the process.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:

Village Holiday Lighting – Ms. Mathiasen reported that Ms. Rubenbauer had informed her that Mr. John Bronson and his staff have volunteered to design and decorate the Village area for the holiday season. She noted that Ms. Rubenbauer had purchased the lights and extension cords for the display and has requested to be reimbursed for the expense.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MS. STRICKER, SECONDED BY MR. CASNER, TO REIMBURSE MS. RUBENBAUER \$311.85 FOR THE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS SHE PURCHASED FOR THE EAST HADDAM VILLAGE AREA. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Town Office Parking Lot – Signs, Lighting and Walkways – Ms. Mathiasen reported that Mr. Walter had asked her to solicit feedback from the owners of LaVita Gustosa regarding the new parking restriction signs in the municipal parking lot. She stated that Ms. Cacace had stated that it would be helpful to shorten the restricted parking hours; however, the bigger concern was with safety issues at the upper lot. Ms. Cacace stated that the lack of lighting and safe walkways is a concern, especially when it gets dark so early. The Commissioners agreed with the concern over poor lighting and walkways in the upper lot and Ms. Mathiasen stated she would bring the subject back up with the new Board of Selectmen.

Historical Society Letter of Support for Palmer/Warner House – Ms. Stricker advised that Mr. Farrell had requested EDC’s support for the Historical Society’s ownership of the Palmer/Warner House and provided some background on the issue. The Commissioners reviewed the draft letter and several minor revisions were suggested. A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MR. RUCKER, TO SEND THE LETTER, AS AMENDED, TO ATTORNEY GENERAL JEPSEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

At the Commissioners’ recommendation, Ms. Stricker agreed to send copies of the letter to the East Haddam Historical and Agriculture Commissions.

NEW BUSINESS

Commercial Use of Transfer Station Policies – Ms. Stricker reported that there will be no changes to the policies for commercial use of the Transfer Station. This item will also be removed from future agendas until there are further action items.

Use of Tax Incentive Program – Mr. Odell advised that the Town’s Assessor has asked Mr. Clark has to complete a prospective Personal Property report for the planned brewery so that a tax abatement value can be estimated. Mr. Rucker volunteered to assist Mr. Clark with completing the report.

EDC Ordinance – Goals/Rewrite Suggestions – There was no update on this agenda item.

Mail Received – Mr. Odell reported that Mr. Gionta had submitted a letter of resignation from EDC stating he was over-extended on his work and volunteer committee schedules. Mr. Odell recommended changing Ms. Rubenbauer’s alternate status to a regular Commissioner and solicited input from the Commissioners for individuals to fill the alternate position. A MOTION WAS MADE BY MS STRICKER, SECONDED BY MR. CASNER, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT MS. RUBERBAUER’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION STATUS BE CHANGED FROM ALTERNATE TO REGULAR COMMISSIONER. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Public Comment/Other – Ms. Mathiasen advised that the Central Regional Tourism District had launched a new website; however, the information contained on the website for East Haddam was not current. She noted that she had contacted the Tourism Department and they will update the information.

Ms. Stricker expressed concern over the impact, on the Nathan Hale Pharmacy, of the State’s mandate for union workers to get their prescriptions filled only through mail-order or CVS. The Commissioners informed her that Ms. Ziobron is drafting a letter opposing the new mandate for EDC to consider sending to Gov. Malloy. Ms. Stricker agreed to follow-up with Ms. Ziobron.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary