

April 6, 2012

To: East Haddam Economic Development Commission

From: Peter Simmons

Subj: Economic Development Progress Report #3 – March 2 to April 4, 2012

1. Chowder Cook-off: see attached report.
2. DEEP Sunrise Resort: DEEP received two proposals. The state is beginning its review and due diligence phase, they are anticipating preliminary findings in one-month.
3. Business Development
 - a. East Haddam Brewery: Met with Mr. Joseph Clark on March 2nd to review his progress in opening his brewery. Joe is working with the Essex Savings Bank to finance his business. Jon Foss from GO Environmental has been retained by Essex Savings. He will be assessing the site for the bank. Situation: the USEPA had concerns with the property in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1991 they conducted soil testing that found semi-volatiles in the soil, but no groundwater (GW) testing was done. EPA removed the site from their lists in 1995 with a no further action letter (NFAL); EPA removed many low/no priority sites from their system at this time. GO will be conducting GW testing with two wells and about eight borings to confirm that there are no pollutant mobility or direct exposure issues. As of Thursday, 4/5, Joe was considering whether to contract the this work, and advance to a closing or “throw in the towel”; he cites an impatient investor and running out of an internally imposed 6-month timeframe for closing the deal.
 - b. Two Wrasslin’ Cats Coffee House
 - i. Coordinating water service approval with Land Use Office, DPH and CHD
 - ii. Draft screening application submitted to DPH and WUCC. Assisting Coffee house in responding to questions.
 - c. Norpro Site (385 Town Street)
 - i. Site owned by Essex Savings Bank
 - ii. Walk through with bank conducted on 3/20
 - iii. Bank has potential purchaser of site; developer seeks to subdivide for small business space; developer has potential tenants, and seeking help to find additional tenants.
 - d. Brownell Company Site
 - i. Dispatched letter to Mr. Ferraz, president of Brownell advising him of the state environmental assessment and filing requirements associated with commercial real estate transactions.
 - ii. Connected Mr. Donkin (Cleveland Eastern Mixer) with Tom Morano of CL & P for assistance with energy conservation programs.
 - iii. Mick Marsden will be meeting with Sean (CEM) during April and May to discuss schedule and financing.
 - iv. Provided CEM with financial program information on the USDA Business & Industry Loan Guarantee Program
 - e. Banner: assisted Jack’s Place with contractor/fire marshal inspection issue
 - f. Curds and Whey (Norwich Road): Assisted the property/business owner in identifying a reuse for the building. I spoke with Jim Ventres on options -- no real easy options, as the

building is a “home occupancy”; 1) locate a joint-venture business in this building; 2) convert to an “in-law” apartment. An attempt to expand the commercial district up Norwich Road to Boardman road lost by one vote of P & Z.

- g. Boardman House B & B: met with the Hylanders and reviewed their application to the DECD Small Business Express loan program. Researched other funding programs that the Boardman House could pursue for their proposed business expansion. Programs include USDA Business & Industry Program, MCRC, SBA programs.
- h. Small Business Express Program: MCRC will be executing a partnership agreement with DECD for local administration of the state Small Business Express Program. MCRC anticipates an executed and returned contract with DECD by the end of April with funds available for lend in the same timeframe. SBE RLF can provide up to \$100k, at 4% for up to 10-year terms.

4. Agriculture

- a. Town Agricultural Commission
 - i. Plans to pursue a \$20,000 Agriculture Restoration Grant from the Department of Agriculture (DoAg).
 - ii. Develop a cooperative agreement letter with DoAg to support future farmland preservation
 - iii. May pursue a Farm Viability Grant from DoAg
- b. Attended the March 5th and April 2nd Agriculture Commission Meeting
 - i. Briefed Commission on Chatham Health District Community Transformation Grant (see below)
 - ii. Farmer’s Market
 - 1. Jeff Savitski will be the Market Master
 - 2. Location: Grange (except during Lions Club event)
 - 3. Time/Day: Wednesday at 4 to 7 (3 to 6 in Fall)
 - 4. Cost: \$100/season; \$60/1/2 season
 - 5. 10 to 12 local vendors (good economic development)
 - 6. Open into October for Fall produce
 - 7. easthaddamfarmersmarket@gmail.com
 - 8. Market will police the site of trash
 - 9. Separate town bank account established
 - 10. Fred Weisbach presented to the Board of Selectmen
 - iii. Community Agriculture Center
 - 1. Harris Property
 - 2. Subject of proposed \$20,000 grant application to state DoAg for restoration
 - 3. Presentation schedule for April 18th at 6PM at the Old Town Hall
- c. Finalized letter from M. Walter to Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) requesting a conservation plan for the Harris Property; coordinating with NRCS regarding plan and mapping to support applications
- d. Working with J. Stone and S. McKinnon in development of a Community Farm Organization and in preparing the DoAg Restoration Grant Application.

5. Introductory meeting with Thad King of the Chatham Health District (CHD)

- a. Community Transformation Grant: the CHD has a two-year CDC award from fall 2011 to encourage healthy lifestyles in the County. Objective
 - i. Identifying policy changes within school districts to allow for fresh produce to be provided to schools through the Farm to Table program

- ii. Other initiatives to promote healthy eating in the county
 - iii. The CHD is looking for farm and restaurant representation
 - b. Farmer's Markets
 - i. The CHD certifies area farmer's markets
 - ii. A temporary/seasonal food service permit is issued to the coordinator of the market.
 - c. Commercial Kitchens
 - i. The cost of building a commercial grade kitchen is a threshold issue preventing many farms from preparing and marketing prepared foods.
 - ii. The town should identify and investigate the potential for cooperatively using existing commercial kitchens currently available at town schools and churches.
- 6. CONNDOT Mobility Project
 - a. Goal to bid, award and complete construction during the 2012 construction season
 - b. Improved Crosswalk near La Vita's Restaurant (textured surface if practicable)
 - c. Will need to keep DOT's attention to this project. Staff shortages at DOT will affect their attention to this project.
 - d. Look to site new signage in village (CONNDOT may be able to fund outside of Mobility Project)
 - i. Electronic vehicle speed alerts (check cost)
 - ii. Improved speed limit signage
- 7. Plains Road
 - a. Suggestion: this is an aesthetics issue not an economic development issue
 - b. The Land Use and Public Works offices coordinating a plan with land owner of the apartments.
 - c. It is unlikely that parking will be completely moved to the rear of the buildings due to septic tanks, leach fields, number of vehicles and building layout.
 - d. Parallel parking scheme recommended to accommodate a fire lane
 - e. Parking is on state land, a formal agreement is recommended to avoid legal liability
- 8. Swing Bridge
 - a. Met with Richard Van Allen on March 3rd regarding the swing bridge.
 - b. Attempting to get an answer from the USCG regarding a modified bridge opening schedule
 - c. Requesting that DOT implement an enhanced communication system broadcasting the bridge status and schedule.
- 9. CONNDOT Paving of Route 149
 - a. Contacted Eric Christiana (860) 295-6160, CONNDOT Marlborough Office
 - b. CONNDOT planning to pave Route 149 and 82 from Village to Landing Hill Road
 - c. Coordinating Schedule, Mobility Project and Goodspeed performance schedule
 - d. More information to follow