

**Economic Development Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
October 3, 2013**

Attending: J. Albuquerque; R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; R. Parady; P. Rubenbauer; G. Rucker; P. Simmons (Economic Development Coordinator)

Absent: E. Odell; F. Weissbach

Guests: S. McKinnon; M. Walter

Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He noted that Mr. Odell's term had expired and that he had submitted his resignation from the Commission. MR. CASNER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN, TO ACCEPT, WITH REGRET, MR. ODELL'S RESIGNATION FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Mathiasen noted that she had previously emailed the Commissioners information on the role of Chairperson and stated that Mr. Casner had volunteered for the position. She stated that Mr. Weissbach had agreed to act as temporary Chair but supported Mr. Casner as permanent Chair. Ms. Mathiasen advised that she is willing to continue in her role providing support to the Chairperson and as tourism liaison.

MOTION MADE BY MR. RUCKER, SECONDED BY MS. MATHIASEN, TO NOMINATE ROBERT CASNER AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION FOR A ONE YEAR TERM. UNANIMOUS AYE.

**Minutes** – The Commissioners reviewed the minutes and requested the following revisions be made on page 2:

**Sewer Extension Feasibility Evaluation Rt 82/151 – Engineering Proposal**

- Revise the last sentence of paragraph 2 to read: *“In response to question from the Commissioners, he advised that of the few exceptions Fuss & O’Neill had pursued, they had had a success rate of 3 out of 3.”*
- Revise the last paragraph/motion to read: *“MOTION MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MR. RUCKER, TO RECOMMEND THE TOWN REQUEST FUSS & O’NEILL DEVELOP A QUOTE TO CREATE ENGINEERING SPECIFICATIONS FOR INSTALLING A SLEEVE UNDERGROUND TO BE INSTALLED DURING THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION’S (CT DOT) ROUTE 82 BRIDGE WORK AND FOR WORKING WITH THE CT DOT’S PRE-ENGINEERING GROUP TO INCORPORATE THE SPECIFICATIONS INTO THEIR EXISTING DESIGN. UNANIMOUS AYE.”*

MR. ALBUQUERQUE MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MS. RUBENBAUER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED. UNANIMOUS AYE.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Status Reports:**

**Economic Development Coordinator** – Mr. Simmons reviewed several points in his report, a copy of which is attached to and made part of these minutes. He responded to concerns raised about the impact of the closure of Norwich Road on local businesses and confirmed that he is researching State programs that could minimize the financial impact on those businesses.

In response to a question from Mr. Casner, Mr. Simmons said he feels the work on the tax incentive application is going more slowly than what he would like; however, the applicant has not expressed any concerns yet. Mr. Walter stated that the attorneys are negotiating the basis of the value of the property and are close to an agreement.

**First Selectman Update** – Mr. Walter reported on the following items:

- He requested that the Commissioners keep up-to-date on the activities of them Municipal Facilities Building Advisory Group and the Elementary School Building Advisory Group and noted that there are a number of potential resources for grants for the projects that will off-set the impact on taxpayers. He also stated that representatives from both Committees will be at the polling site of the November election to answer questions.
- CT DEEP has completed its clean-up of the Sunrise property and he had attended a public hearing regarding the property where a lot of good ideas about future uses were discussed.

- He expects to receive Public Works Director Lunt's analysis of the three quotes for the hopper repair at the Transfer Station and the Selectmen have agreed to call a Special Meeting to act on her recommendation. There was a general discussion about the need to regularly maintain the hopper to keep it in good working order.

Commercial Use of Transfer Station for Municipal Solid Waste – There was no additional update on this agenda item. At Mr. Walter's request, Mr. Casner agreed to confirm with Mr. Odell that he will continue to participate in the Transfer Station Committee meetings.

Sewer Extension Feasibility Evaluation Rt 82/151 – Mr. Casner reported that Fuss & O'Neill will provide a proposal and that Land Use Administrator Ventres had provided an analysis of current usage of the system. In response to concerns raised by Mr. Albuquerque, Mr. Casner confirmed that the Commissioners will have sufficient information on the feasibility of extending the sewer line to vote on whether or not to recommend moving forward. Mr. Walter noted that he expects the State will require the Town to pay for any work, plus 10%, related to a change order for installing a sleeve underground during their work on the Norwich Road bridges.

East Haddam Business Association – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the Business Association is planning a tag sale for October 12<sup>th</sup> at the Grange.

Farmers' Market – Mr. Walter confirmed that the last Farmers' Market was held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and said that he felt the season went well. He introduced Mr. McKinnon and asked him to provide the Commissioners with an overview of the Agriculture Commission's plans for an incubator project for small farmers on the Harris property. Mr. McKinnon noted that the Harris property is designated for mixed-use and that the Town has received requests to reserve space for a ball field which he expects can be accomplished along with the planned agricultural programs.

Mr. McKinnon reviewed a map of the Harris property and stated that there is currently a pilot grazing project being accommodated on one section of the land. He noted that there are plans to lease plots and install a commercial kitchen. He also stated that they have been talking with several communities who have similar projects and have received some very useful advice.

#### **Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:**

Gillette Castle Shows/Humanities Grant – final report and survey analysis – There was no update on this agenda item. Ms. Mathiasen advised that she expects to have the East Haddam Stage Company's final report available for the next EDC meeting.

Ad for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Event Magazine – new list for free ad drawings 2014 – Ms. Mathiasen reported she is running low on business names to draw for EDC's free ad in the Events Magazine and recommended using EDC's business list to repopulate the drawings. The Commissioners agreed with her recommendation. She also noted that the deadline for including EDC's paid ad in the East Haddam Magazine had passed so she would like to place a similar ad in the Chester edition.

MOTION MADE BY MS. MATHIASEN, SECONDED BY MS. RUBENBAUER, TO ALLOCATE \$145.00 TO RUN AN EAST HADDAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AD IN THE CHESTER EVENTS MAGAZINE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Option for Rt. 151/82 Directory Signs – Mr. Walter reiterated that he had received a request from the Moodus property owner where EDC's director sign is located that s/he would like the sign removed. He questioned the usefulness of the signs now that most people have GPS and suggested establishing a sub-committee including himself, a professional sign person, and a representative from EDC to research any existing easements and develop a proposal for an alternative approach for the signs. Mr. Parady volunteered to participate on the sub-committee.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

EDC Budget items related to draft Town Economic Development Strategy – Ms. Mathiasen reported that she had received a copy of EDC's 2013-14 budget and questioned the following items:

- A new line item for consulting fees for \$20,000.00. Mr. Simmons advised he had requested the line item for ad hoc reports and analysis EDC might want to do on projects such as the sewer extension sleeve engineering work.

- A \$750.00 increase in Dues/Subscriptions. Mr. Simmons advised that that amount had been requested for the CERC Site Finder subscription; however, he recently learned that the fee for municipalities is \$550.00.
- \$1000.00 for the Farmer's Market – It was determined that these funds were for seed money for the start-up of the Farmers' Market.

CERC Site Finder Town membership request for payment - Mr. Simmons reviewed the benefits of the CERC Site Finder website and noted that municipalities can list an unlimited number of town-owned properties and up to 5 privately owned properties annually. He stated that CERC Site Finder is the nationally recognized site for listing commercial properties.

MOTION MADE BY MR. PARADY, SECONDED BY MR. RUCKER, TO ALLOCATE \$550.00 FROM EDC'S BUDGET TO PAY THE CERC SITE FINDER MEMBERSHIP FEE. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Town Blight Ordinance – There was a general discussion about the Town adopting a blight ordinance and Mr. Walter stated that he is in favor of doing so.

EDC Ordinance – Goals Rewrite Suggestions – Ms. Mathiasen stated that she believes the Town is now moving forward on this project; however, she had no additional information.

Mail Received – Several Commissioners received an invitation to a discussion on strong communities and youth advocacy sponsored by the Local Prevention Council and Youth & Family Services..

Public Comment/Other – Mr. Simmons distributed a draft EDC strategy document and suggested creating a sub-committee to finalize the strategy.

THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, MR. RUCKER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. PARADY, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ Sharon R. Wheeler  
Recording Secretary