

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2014**

Attending: J. Albuquerque (arrived 8:25 p.m.); R. Casner; D. Mathiasen; R. Parady; P. Rubenbauer; P. Simmons (Economic Development Coordinator), F. Weissbach

Absent: G. Rucker

Guests: J. Jansky, Jr.; B. Lunt (Public Works); K. Matthews (P&Z); S. Wheeler

Mr. Casner called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Minutes – The Commissioners reviewed the minutes from the December 5, 2013 meeting. Mr. Casner requested that the first sentence in the “Public Comment/Other” section be revised to read, “*There was no additional public comment at the meeting*”.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Status Reports:

Commercial Use of Transfer Station for Municipal Solid Waste – Mr. Casner reported that the Transfer Station sub-committee is preparing to issue its report/recommendation and stated that, as a member of the sub-committee, he would like direction from the Commissioners on how they would like him to represent EDC’s position on the subject. He stated that he had invited the Public Works Director to this meeting so that she could provide her perspective on the situation and respond to questions. He invited Director Lunt to address the group.

Ms. Lunt stated that it is the engineer’s recommendation that, to extend the life of the hopper, the Town should restrict its use by commercial haulers. She stated that it is the sub-committee’s consensus that the Town should continue to pay the commercial haulers tipping fees and that the haulers should bring their loads to the Willimantic Transfer Station for the duration of the Town’s contract with that facility. There was a general discussion about the potential for negotiating a contract with the CRRA site in Essex. In response to a question from the Commissioners, Ms. Lunt advised that, excluding the AllWaste of Hartford loads, commercial haulers deliver approximately 35% of the town’s trash to the Transfer Station.

Mr. Parady stated that the East Haddam commercial haulers are very conscientious about how they dump their loads and he feels that if the hopper and compactor received proper ongoing maintenance, the haulers should be able to continue to use facility without jeopardizing the equipment. There was a general discussion regarding the variability of the size of the commercial trucks that utilize the facility and the limitations of the current Town ordinance. Ms. Lunt and Mr. Walter further noted that large recyclables ending up in the hopper also risk its integrity. Mr. Walter confirmed that the Town’s ordinance can be rewritten to tighten up how the Transfer Station is utilized.

The Commissioners discussed potential options available regarding the use of the Transfer Station by commercial haulers and Ms. Lunt advised it would cost approximately \$400,000.00 to install a tipping floor. Mr. Walter stated he did not feel that was a good use of the Town’s funds.

Mr. Weissbach stated that he would like the sub-committee to present more than one option in their recommendation to the Selectmen. Mr. Simmons recommended that any change in the status quo should allow the commercial haulers sufficient time to adjust their fees and notify their customers of any increases.

Mr. Casner recognized Mr. Jansky and in response to a question he presented, Ms. Lunt and Mr. Walter advised that the federal and state governments are quickly moving toward requiring municipalities to enforce a minimum percentage of recycling. Mr. Jansky stated that he feels the engineer’s report is very critical of the commercial haulers and he encouraged the Commissioners to read the report. In response to a question from Ms. Mathiasen, Mr. Walter advised that he expects to have the sub-committee’s report/recommendation for the January 15th Selectmen’s meeting. Mr. Casner agreed to circulate the engineer’s report and the sub-committee’s draft report to the Commissioners for their review and feedback prior to it being finalized and presented to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Mathiasen reiterated that she would like to have the input received from the commercial haulers at this, and previous, meetings incorporated into the report that goes to the Selectmen. She felt that Mr. Casner’s position on the sub-committee was to make sure that the East Haddam business feedback regarding the impact of any transfer station policy changes was conveyed to decision-makers.

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 advised that Shagbark has made significant progress resolving issues raised by the Fire Marshal and noted that their application for the installation of a solar array will be on the agenda for the January 14th meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

The Commissioners discussed several potential commercial property listings for the CERC site. Mr. Simmons advised that the site also notifies him of businesses looking for commercial properties. There was a general discussion regarding updating the current bid ordinance and how to promote the development of additional Bed & Breakfasts in Town.

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

- The Village Mobility project for the two crosswalks is going out to bid;
- The State will hold a final public meeting in February regarding the Norwich Road closing;
- He feels that the DECD grant for a commercial kitchen at the Harris property will promote business and job growth and requested the EDC Commissioners assistance in locating potential clients.

Mr. Walter further advised that the Town had received a private donation for the commercial kitchen which will be used for salaries. Mr. Weissbach suggested looping in the local banks as potential funding sources for the spin-off businesses.

In response to a question from Ms. Mathiasen, Mr. Walter advised that the Town is waiting for a response to its USDA grant application before scheduling a referendum on the Municipal Facilities project. He stated that he expects the USDA to respond in the near future and anticipates that the Town will then schedule another public hearing in February and the referendum in March.

Shagbark Solar Panel Project Update – This agenda item was discussed during the Economic Development Coordinator's report and is reported on in the above minutes.

Sewer Extension Feasibility Evaluation Rte. 82/151 – There was no update on this agenda item.

East Haddam Business Association – Ms. Mathiasen reported that the Business Association will coordinate a combined Taste of East Haddam and Business Expo in April. She advised that I-Park has volunteered to host the event on their grounds and the EHBA will consider the location at their meeting in mid-January.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:

Directory Signs – Mr. Parady advised that the business directory sign in Moodus will be removed and he is looking into replacing the directory signs with something smaller. Mr. Casner offered to work with Mr. Parady to identify potential locations for the new signs.

Detour Ad in Haddam & Chester Events Magazine – This item was tabled and will be discussed at the February meeting.

Tourism Promotion Planning – Ms. Mathiasen advised that it was time to renew EDC's ad in the Central Regional District's Tourism Guide. There was a brief discussion about the ad and the publication.

MR. WEISSBACH MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. ALBUQUERQUE, TO AUTHORIZE MS. MATHIASEN TO EXPEND \$500.00 TO RENEW THE EAST HADDAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVERTISEMENT IN THE REGIONAL CT TOURISM GUIDE. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Mathiasen reported that I-Park is considering participation in the Forest and Park's Association Trails Day weekend in June. She also hoped to promote Gillette Castle in the spring/summer as part of the CT State Parks centennial celebration.

Business Mailing content – Ms. Mathiasen reviewed several topics for inclusion in EDC's next business mailing and requested the Commissioners forward her any other suggestions they may have.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of Local Bid Ordinance – This agenda item was tabled and will be discussed at the February meeting.

Plan of Conservation & Development / Strategy & Proposed Professional Services – Ms. Mathiasen requested input regarding updates to EDC's section in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development and encouraged the Commissioners' to attend the Planning and Zoning Commission's meeting when the Plan is discussed.

Mr. Casner advised that he would like to set-up a sub-committee to identify EDC projects/priorities for 2014. Mr. Parady, Mr. Weissbach and Ms. Rubenbauer agreed to participate on the sub-committee. Mr. Simmons advised that requests have gone out for the Town's Boards and Commissions to draft their 2014/15 budgets and noted that the EDC Commissioners should consider potential uses for the funds in their Consultant/Professional Services budget line.

Mail Received – There was no mail discussed at the meeting.

Public Comment/Other – There was no additional public comment at the meeting. In response to a question raised by Mr. Weissbach, the Commissioners stated they did not know if a Farmers' Market committee was meeting regularly, but it was noted that the Market Master has been running the project and reports directly to the First Selectman.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

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