

**Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2010**

Attending: R. Casner; M. Gionta; R. Scherrer; P. Stricker; M. Ziobron (EDC Coordinator)
Guests: H. Kittner; T. Marano; D. McMahon; M. Walter; S. Wheeler;

There was not a quorum at 7:10 p.m., so Mr. Scherrer asked Mr. McMahon to provide the Goodspeed update. Mr. McMahon advised that the renovations to the Lawton House were almost complete and that the Goodspeed has closed on their contract with DEDC. He stated that Mr. Ventres and Mr. Jezek are working with the Department of Health to resolve the outstanding water issues. He further noted that the Goodspeed has hired someone to act as an interface between the Goodspeed and the construction staff and that he expects they will break ground on the new houses in 4-6 weeks. Ms. Kittner advised that their season begins on April 16th.

Mr. Scherrer thanked Mr. McMahon and Ms. Kittner for the update and then asked Ms. Ziobron to introduce the guest. Ms. Ziobron introduced Mr. Marano from Northeast Utilities and provided a brief background on his economic development work with CT cities and towns. Mr. Marano thanked the group for the opportunity to speak with them and reviewed the materials he had distributed earlier. He briefly reviewed the history of the Community Builders Institute and went over some of the economic development classes they offer. He then presented a Case Study of Guilford as a Development Ready Municipality.

Mr. Marano stated that CT Builders Institute markets CT cities and towns around the country as well in Europe and that East Haddam can provide them with listings of available commercial properties in the Town. He and the Commissioners discussed several topics and, in response to a question from Ms. Ziobron, he advised that the membership fee for the Main Street Center covers the Town as a whole.

Mr. Scherrer thanked Mr. Marano for his presentation and called the meeting to order at 8:12 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes from the regular February 11th meeting were reviewed. Several revisions were requested. MS. STRICKER MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MR. CASNER, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 4, 2010 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OLD BUSINESS

Status Reports:

Goodspeed Properties – This update was provided earlier in the meeting and is recorded in the minutes above.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO HEAR THE FIRST SELECTMEN'S REPORT NEXT. UNANIMOUS AYE.

First Selectman's Report – Mr. Walter advised that the Selectmen are working through the budget process and he expects to present a \$27.5M budget to the Board of Finance. He stated that the proposed budget will result in a small increase to the Town's mil rate. In response to a question from Mr. Scherrer, he reported that the Village Pedestrian Safety Improvement is still tied up at the CT DOT.

Economic Development Coordinator – Ms. Ziobron reported that the land-swap died in Committee last week and distributed a copy of a letter Senator Daily wrote supporting the proposal. She expressed her extreme disappointment that Senator Daily's letter did not recognize that she also represents East Haddam and virtually ignored any potential impact of the proposed land-swap on East Haddam. Mr. Walter stated that no Town officials were ever advised of, or consulted about, the land-swap and the Commissioners agreed that East Haddam should not have had to hear about the proposal from another Town. The Commissioners agreed that Senator Daily's lack of consideration of East Haddam's position in this situation was not acceptable, noting that the Town's concern about the impact of the land-swap is two-fold: (1) the Town is an adjacent property owner and has a right of way on the property that was placed in the bill to swap, and (2) in light of the Town's desire to have the Goodspeed locate their proposed second theater in East Haddam and the East Haddam Village Revitalization Commission's efforts to attract developers for the Town Office site, could have had a serious negative financial impact on the Town.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER, TO HAVE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION SEND A LETTER TO SENATOR DAILY EXPRESSING THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THIS MATTER. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Ziobron also reported on the following items:

- She recently had a good discussion with Mr. Gasner, Development Director for Simons Realty Group, who represents Mr. Jabara, about the Johnsonville property and she feels there may be a renewed interest in selling the property.
- Regarding revisions to the Town's signage regulations, she suggested quicker progress might be made if she works directly with Mr. Ventres on the project.
- Response of the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the proposed expansion of the Village district was not positive and, subsequent to the P&Z meeting, she met with Mr. Ventres and discussed revisions to the proposal. They agreed reducing the proposal to just include the historic properties might be more acceptable to the P&Z Commissioners. Mr. Ventres has agreed to submit that concept as a staff recommendation at the next P&Z meeting.
- The Corner Restaurant is open and has been very busy. Ms. Mathiasen will draft a press release regarding the opening.
- Participation in the State DEP's site-walk at the former Sunrise Resort for potential developers was poorly attended and she contacted the DEP and provided several suggestions to publicize the next site walk. Ms. Stricker acknowledged the low attendance at the site-walk; however, noted that it is her understanding that the DEP has received a lot of calls inquiring about the property.

Ms. Ziobron further advised that she has been elected president of the Friends of Gillette's Castle. She noted that they have contracted with the East Haddam Stage Company for summer performances at the park and that they are currently looking for volunteers to staff the gift shop.

Other Businesses Updates/New Businesses/Events/Tourism:

- Chowder Cook-Off – Ms. Stricker reported Ms. Mathiasen recommended donating the extra mugs to Town employees. A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER AND SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER TO DONATE THE EXTRA MUGS TO TOWN EMPLOYEES. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Ms. Stricker reported that the net proceeds from the Chowder Cook-Off was \$1220 and reviewed the list of recipients of the previous years' proceeds. The Commissioners discussed several organizations to contribute to this year. A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER TO DONATE \$100 TO THE SPORTSMENS' CLUB AND DIVIDE THE REMAINING BALANCE OF THE PROCEEDS FROM THE CHOWDER COOK-OFF TO THE GARDEN CLUB, MUSIC ON THE RIVER, THE FOOD BANK, AND OPERATION FUEL. UNANIMOUS AYE.

The Commissioners also discussed a donation to the Little League for a new banner and agreed to fund that out of the EDC budget.

- Other – May 1&2 Essex Train Opening Weekend – business tie-ins – The Commissioners discussed whether EDC or the Village merchants should sponsor the cost of paying a driver for a shuttle bus from the Goodspeed Station in Tylerville to the East Haddam Village. Ms. Stricker recommended that EDC underwrite the cost for 2010 and the businesses should fund the shuttle starting in 2011. The Commissioners approved of her suggestion and agreed to write a letter to the Village Merchants advising them of EDC's decision.
- EDC Alternates to be added to Ordinance – The Commissioners discussed the benefits of having two alternate members on EDC and agreed that they would like to bring a change to the Ordinance to Town Meeting for a vote in April. A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CASNER, SECONDED BY MS. STRICKER TO REVISE THE TOWN ORDINANCE RELATED TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE TWO ALTERNATE MEMBERS. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Mr. Scherrer noted that Mr. Sabetta's travel schedule has prevented him from regular attendance at EDC meetings and that he has agreed to change his membership from Regular to Alternate. Mr. Scherrer also reported that he would be stepping down

from the Commission after the June meeting. The Commissioners discussed several potential candidates to fill the two Regular and one Alternate positions that will become available.

Status Reports (Continued):

Revitalization Commission – Mr. Gionta reported that the Commission is going out to bid for a conceptual plan for the Town Office Site.

Signage Ordinance – Next Steps – This item was discussed during the Economic Development Coordinator’s update and is reported on above in these minutes.

Business Tax Incentives – Next Steps – Ms. Zioborn reported she had met with Mr. Walter to go over the Attorney’s comments and that she expects to have a final draft of the Business Tax Incentive Plan to present to the Board of Selectmen by the end of April. She noted that Ms. Stricker had created a draft application for the Commissioners’ review at one of their next meetings. Ms. Stricker stated that they would also need to create a checklist and that they should pan a marketing campaign.

Moodus Commercial Infrastructure – Next Steps – Mr. Casner reported that he and Mr. Albuquerque are working on flows to determine a potential cost to install a sewer system in the Moodus commercial area. He stated that he expects they can begin having discussions with Moodus business owners in 60 days. He noted that he believes they will have a high level estimate of the cost at the next EDC meeting.

Goodspeed 2nd Theatre – Next Steps – Ms. Stricker reported on the meeting that she, Mr. Scherrer and Mr. Walter had had with Ms. Kittner and Mr. McMahon. There was a general discussion regarding site options for a 2nd theatre.

Johnsonville - This item was discussed during the Economic Development Coordinator’s update and is reported on above in these minutes.

Banner – There was no update on this agenda item.

OLD BUSINESS

Mail received – There was no mail to discuss.

New Municipal Website Launch – There was no update on this agenda item.

Public Comment/Other – There was no public comment.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Wheeler
Recording Secretary